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# LITTELL'S LIVING AGE.

Fifth Series, }  
Volume LXVI }

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{ From Beginning,  
Vol. CLXXXI. }

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## A MORNING WALK.

THOUGH we have said good-bye,  
Clasped hands and parted ways, my dream  
and I,  
There still is beauty on the earth and glory in  
the sky.

The world has not grown old  
With foolish hopes, nor commonplace nor  
cold,  
Nor is there any tarnish on the happy harvest  
gold.

Spent was the night in sighing,  
In tears and vain regrets, heartache and cry-  
ing—  
Lo! breaks the windy azure morn with clouds  
tumultuous flying!

Life is not all a cheat,  
A sordid struggle trite and incomplete,  
When sun and shadow flee across the billows  
of the wheat;

When upward pierces keen  
The lark's shrill exultation o'er the sheen  
Of the young barley's wavy fleece of silky  
silvery green.

Didst think, oh, narrow heart!  
That mighty Nature shared thy puny smart?  
Face her serene, heart-whole, heart-free, that  
is the better part.

Are the high heavens bent,  
A vault of snow and sapphire wonderment,  
Merely to arch, dull egotist, thy dismal dis-  
content?

Wouldst pour into the ear  
Of the young morn the thoughts that make  
thee drear,  
View the land's joyous splendor through the  
folly of a tear?

The boon thou hast not had—  
'Tis a slight trivial thing to make thee sad  
When with the sunshine and the storm God's  
glorious world is glad.

'Tis guilt to weep for it!  
When blithe the swallows by the poplars flit,  
Aslant they go, pied cloven gleams thro'  
leafage golden lit;

While breezy purples stain  
The long low grassy reaches of the plain  
Where ashen pale the alders quake before the  
hurricane.

Ah! there are still delights  
Hid in the multitude of common sights,  
The dear and wanted pageant of the summer  
days and nights.

The word is not yet said  
Of ultimate ending, we are quick, not dead,  
Though the dim years withhold from us one  
frail joy coveted.

Our life is all too brief,  
The world too wide, too wonderful for grief,  
Too crowded with the loveliness of bird and  
bud and leaf.

So though we said good-bye  
With bitter futile tears, my dream and I—  
Each slender blade of wayside grass is clothed  
with majesty!

Cornhill Magazine.

## A YEAR OF SILENCE.

[“In some of the United States, the local Congress  
does not meet every year.” — BRYCE.]

OH for a year of silence! Could we go  
Each to our quiet desk, or house, or field,  
And cease our babbling; plough, and reap,  
and sow,  
And read old books, and ransack treasures  
sealed

Of learning, writ in ages long ago!  
Then let some strong-souled Gordon take the  
field

Of action; while the masters, “they who  
know,”

Would ravage Time its honeyed stores to  
yield!

That were as dreamland! Pulpit, senate,  
mart,

Suddenly silent; only Nature heard  
With her still music, or her prophet's word!  
The while the noisy blusterer would depart,  
Where men talk least, his year of grace to  
spend,

To learn his ignorance and his manners mend!  
Spectator. A. G. B.

ALL things that live, our priests of Science  
teach,

Observe one law of growth. From germi-  
nal cell

Or sensitive spot, as fit conditions fell,  
Were types evolved; and, mastering conflict,  
each

By fine degrees of change did slowly reach  
Its latest form. Can science thus dispel  
The mysteries of the human miracle,  
High thought, right will, fair dreams, harmo-  
nious speech?

I turn for answer to the Midland shire  
Where yeomen fathers, versed in wool,  
evolve

A Shakespeare—suddenly! the Sussex fields  
Where farmer squire succeeds to farmer  
squire,

Till Shelley leaps! Alas, that Science wields  
Faith's dogma-mace when doubts are hard  
to solve!

H. G. HEWLETT.

From Temple Bar.

MR. DISRAELI.

IN TWO PARTS.

## PART I.

"I ALWAYS hold that no one is ever missed," wrote the still young Disraeli from Paris, under date 22nd November, 1839; "but he [the Duke of Wellington] is so great a man that the world would perhaps fancy his loss irreparable." This month of April brings on the ninth year that has passed since Lord Beaconsfield died, and the truth of this apothegm has been abundantly proved. When he passed away in the plenitude of his power, conqueror in everything, the trusted friend and minister of the sovereign who had at one time been barely civil to him, the idol of a nation that through a long period of his life had ridiculed and mistrusted him, the adulated leader of a party that he had educated, if not created, it seemed to his contemporaries, even more strongly than was the case respecting the Duke of Wellington, that his loss would be irreparable. But the world must needs go round, and after a while the space Lord Beaconsfield left vacant on the front opposition bench in the House of Lords was occupied, and things went on very much as they had done whilst he was yet with us. His place was not filled up, but it was covered over.

Immediately after the death of Lord Beaconsfield it was announced, with some circumstance, that his secretary and friend had undertaken to write his memoirs. This understanding gained additional currency from a passage in Lord Beaconsfield's will, in which he bequeathed all his manuscript and literary remains to Lord Rowton, with certain instructions about appropriating out of the proceeds, by way of personal recompense, a sum not exceeding £500. This idea was, however, based upon a misconception, and covers a curious episode which I am permitted to relate.

In the year 1872 Lord Beaconsfield commenced his last novel, "Endymion," a work which he undertook chiefly from the honorable desire to obtain a sum of money that would finally wipe off a residue of monetary engagements. He worked at it pretty steadily till the general election

of 1874 called him into office, when his literary work was set aside. Still he wrote at it occasionally till the beginning of the year 1876, when the Eastern question coming to the front and engrossing his attention, he, as he thought finally, laid the work aside. He then wrote a letter to Lord Rowton, enclosing the manuscript, unfinished by something like one hundred pages of printed matter. He stated his view that the pressure of public work would preclude his continuing the novel, and in the event of his decease he instructed Lord Rowton to finish the work, but not to volunteer the announcement that it had been left in an incomplete state, or to avow his collaboration, leaving the book to stand solely in the name of its original creator. Lord Beaconsfield, however, living through his own administration, and finding comparative leisure when in opposition, completed the novel with his own hand, and it was sold for the splendid sum of £10,000, possession of which sum enabled him to fulfil his cherished desire of paying off his debts.

I believe that, as far as Lord Rowton is concerned, the biography of Lord Beaconsfield will remain unwritten. Contrary to general belief, there is, I understand, no such wealth of material as is assumed to exist. Lord Beaconsfield never contemplated having his memoirs written. He wrote no diary, nor did he ever, either in his life or in his testamentary directions, make provisions for his biography being written. He kept no copies of his own letters, and though there remain at present in Lord Rowton's possession piles of letters received by him from more or less eminent personages, these, though possibly useful to compilers of the biographies of his contemporaries, are not regarded as a sufficient basis on which to raise the superstructure of a memoir worthy of Lord Beaconsfield. There is beyond this the difficulty of dealing with much of the correspondence, which is of a strictly confidential character. Some day a worthy life of Benjamin Disraeli will undoubtedly be written. But those most nearly interested and directly responsible do not believe that the time has yet come.

The precise date of Benjamin Disraeli's birth is uncertain. He himself fixed it in December, 1805, but there are some authorities who place the date twelve months earlier. This uncertainty seems to have prevailed at a very early period, for when, on the 31st of July, 1817, he was baptized in the parish church of St. Andrew, Holborn, the entry in the registry book bears the curiously vague statement, "said to be about twelve years old." At this time Isaac d'Israeli, his father, lived in the King's Road, Gray's Inn, the house in which a recent writer in the *Quarterly Review* affirms he was born. But here again obscurity broods over this initial fact. At least four localities claim to have been the birthplace of the great statesman. Mr. Hitchman says he was certainly born in a house at Islington, now numbered 218, in Upper Street. The *Quarterly* reviewer clings to the King's Road; whilst Mr. Disraeli himself, when he did not affirm that he was born in Bloomsbury Square, in a house facing Hart Street, airily alluded to "a set of chambers in the Adelphi," as the place where he first saw the light of heaven.

One other and most amazing declaration on this point was made when he was contesting Shrewsbury in 1841. Addressing the electors from an open window of the Lion Hotel, he dwelt upon the immense sacrifices he had made for their sake, observing that so highly did he stand in the favor of all political parties in the borough of Wycombe, that they had not only offered to place him at the head of the poll, but also to return any second member he might name. With reference to the statement that he had gone to the poll supported by Mr. O'Connell: "Why," he exclaimed, "the borough of West Wycombe is the property of my father. There I was born, there I hope to die, and there, where every one has known me since infancy, I do not need the recommendation of an outsider." That probably was only Mr. Disraeli's fun.

Obscurity in reference to the details of Disraeli's early life extends beyond the date and locality of his birth, touching the place where he received his education. At Shrewsbury, the home of a famous

public school, Mr. Disraeli listened without contradiction to Dr. Kennedy proposing his health as "a Winchester scholar." This little misunderstanding may probably have arisen from the young candidate, asked what school he was at, replying that he was "at Winchester." Dr. Kennedy knew only of one Winchester seminary, the great foundation school, and so introduced to the Shrewsbury boys their brother scholar from Winchester. It was really at a private boarding-school, situated at Winchester, that Disraeli received his education, which was certainly not classical, though his friend in the *Quarterly Review* declares that he "was far from being unacquainted with the works of the classic authors of Greece and Rome, and was thoroughly imbued with their spirit."

Modern languages, it is added upon this same authority, did not form part of young Disraeli's curriculum. In later years, notably at the Berlin Conference, he was at a great disadvantage by reason of his ignorance of French. But that he at one time set himself to learn French appears from a letter written to his sister in 1830, when he was setting out for that voyage to the East which illuminated his early youth. "We made the acquaintance in the packet," he writes, "of a Spanish officer, a very knowing fellow, exceedingly polished and Parisian, having long resided in France. We were introduced to him by the captain as interpreters, being the only men on board supposed to know French. In the mean time our French improves, and perhaps he may be of use to us in Spain."

Young Benjamin was born into moderately comfortable circumstances. His father, Isaac d'Israeli, had what to readers of to-day appears a curiously wide reputation. A leisurely scholar and a plodding writer, he produced the "Curiosities of Literature," and other volumes of the Hone Every-Day-Book order. Benjamin's affection for his father was profound, and his admiration for his literary work was at least well simulated. Starting on his journey to the East he meets at Falmouth a Mr. Cornish. "You never saw such a man!" he writes to his sister.

"He literally knows my father's works by heart, and thinks our revered sire the greatest man that ever lived." Again at Gibraltar he writes to his father: "In the garrison library are all your works, even the last edition of 'The Literary Character;' in the Merchant's Library the greater part;" and this statement is not intended to introduce the announcement which follows it: "Each library possesses a copy of another work supposed to be written by a member of our family, and which is looked upon at Gibraltar as one of the masterpieces of the nineteenth century." This refers to "Vivian Grey."

Most of the letters on this trip to the East were written to "my dearest Father," and breathe the spirit of home affection. "Adieu, my dearest friend," is the conclusion of one; "a thousand loves to all. Write without ceasing." Once, indeed, there is suspicion of the tongue in the cheek as he discourses on some faltering lines written by his father as the epitaph of a favorite dog:—

The epitaph [he writes] is charming, and worthy of the better days of our poetry. Its classical simplicity, its highly artificial finish of style, and fine natural burst of feeling at the end are remarkable, and what, I believe, no writer of the day could produce. It is worthy of the best things in the anthology. It is like an inscription by Sophocles translated by Pope.

Disraeli's father was of Jewish birth, or, as Mr. Disraeli himself put it, was "an Italian, descendant from one of those Hebrew families whom the Inquisition forced to emigrate from the Spanish peninsula in the fifteenth century, and who found a refuge in the more tolerant atmosphere of the Venetian republic." Disraeli's family, though not in opulent, were at least in affluent circumstances. His grandfather, a merchant, had left behind him possessions that gave his son Isaac £3,000 a year, and full opportunity of pursuing those literary studies he loved so well. Isaac d'Israeli at the time of the birth of his son belonged to the Portuguese Synagogue in Bevis Marks. In 1817, the very year when Benjamin, "said to be about twelve years old," was received into the Christian Church, Isaac d'Israeli, quarrel-

ling with the authorities of the synagogue, formally withdrew from the congregation. But, in the mean time, little Benjamin had been initiated into the covenant of Abraham.

He seems to have left school early, and went into business in the office of a firm of attorneys, situated in Frederick Place, Old Jewry. He probably liked this as little as Charles Dickens liked the blacking-pot business to which he was early apprenticed. But, unlike Dickens, Disraeli never told the story of the period of life when he was merging from boyhood into youth. The earliest record—and that merely incidental—is found in the charming little volume of "Home Letters," published on the fourth anniversary of his death by his brother Ralph.

In 1826, when Disraeli was just of age, appeared "Vivian Grey," a book which, forty-four years later, he himself described as "essentially a puerile work, that has baffled even the efforts of its author to suppress it." That, however, was not the view of its contemporaries, nor is it of those who still read it in these later days. It made him immediately famous, and opened to him those gilded saloons and the company of those wits and people of fashion whom he had imagined whilst yet he lived and wrote in his father's house in the Gray's Inn Road. It was not till the year 1827, the year following the publication of "Vivian Grey," that Isaac d'Israeli removed with his family to Bloomsbury Square, a locality then greatly frequented by judges, and what Mr. Disraeli in later House of Commons days used sonorously to allude to as "gentlemen of the long robe." Speaking of "Vivian Grey," the writer in the *Quarterly Review* says:—

The fashionable world which he attempts to picture was not then open to him, and his experience of life and manners must have been confined to his family circle, and to that of the Austens, and to the late Mr. Murray of Albemarle Street, with whom he was on terms of the most intimate friendship, in which, though he met many eminent literary men, he was not likely to learn much of the language and habits of Mayfair.

The journey to the East in company with Mr. Meredith, described in the



"Home Letters," was not young Disraeli's first acquaintance with the Continent. Immediately after the publication of "Vivian Grey," on the 4th of August, 1826, he set out, the guest of his friends Mr. and Mrs. Austen in their travelling carriage, on a tour through France and Italy. At Geneva, where memories of Byron were still fresh, the young man gleaned with avidity all he could learn about the poet, with whom he fancied he had much in common. He made the acquaintance of Tita, the body-servant in whose arms Byron had died. He was not the rose, but he had lived near it; and when, later, Disraeli set out for the East, he engaged Tita to be his valet as he had been Lord Byron's. "Such a valet!" he writes from Malta in 1830. "Byron died in his arms, and his moustachios touch the earth; withal as mild as a lamb, though he has two daggers always about his person." Tita died many years later, holding the honorable appointment of a messenger at the India Office, procured for him at Mr. Disraeli's intervention.

In addition to the house in Bloomsbury Square, Isaac d'Israeli had about this time a little country place at Fyfield, in Oxfordshire, which he occupied before permanently settling at Bradenham House, in Buckinghamshire, where he lived for the rest of his life, and whither, presently, his son was able to bring eminent persons like Lord Lyndhurst to stay for a while. At Fyfield and Bradenham Hall young Disraeli lived, apart from the giddy world, for nearly four years, hard at work in journalism and literature. Here he wrote "The Young Duke," his second novel.

Bradenham is situated within a comfortable walk of Hughenden, and when, in later years, Disraeli lived at the latter place in such retirement as was permitted to one of the foremost statesmen in Europe, he was fond of walking over to Bradenham with the intimate companion of his later years, wandering about the scenes of his early manhood, and recalling the associations of the place. He always, from Fyfield and Bradenham days, liked the notion of having a place of retreat in the country; but he did not find that keen and abiding delight in country life which is given to some men. It was a change, a rest from incessant town labor, and, moreover, to retire to the country at certain periods of the year was the proper thing for an English gentleman to do. Even in the accessories of country life Disraeli's Oriental taste prevailed. He preferred dahlias to daisies, peacocks to robin-red-

breasts; in the last years peacocks were always on the lawn at Hughenden, and Lord Beaconsfield delighted to watch them majestically spread their tails and stalk across the landscape.

The fable which has connected his name with the primrose would much have amused him had he lived to learn it. The only remembered observation he offered with respect to primroses was that they made an excellent salad. The origin of the fable is well known, and I have heard the explanation confirmed by a gentleman whose intimate connection with the court at the time placed him in a position to know the facts. When Lord Beaconsfield was borne to the grave there lay prominent on the coffin a wreath of primroses, bearing the inscription, "His favorite flower," and signed with the autograph initials of the queen. It was naturally assumed that the personal pronoun related to the dead statesman, and the story noised abroad that the primrose was Lord Beaconsfield's favorite flower, was, from the startling incongruity of the association, hailed with pleasure. The truth is, that when the queen wrote that inscription, she had in her mind the prince consort, and desired to offer on the bier of her friend, the dead statesman, the cherished floral gift connected with her dead husband.

Lord Beaconsfield was wont in later days frankly to declare that he "liked trees better than flowers," a preference, it is suggested by one who knew him best, not unconnected with the circumstance that he could see trees, whilst to his fading eyes flowers were but a patch of blurred color. During the last years of his life he was often sadly conscious of his infirmity, and deeply regretted the occasional pain he involuntarily gave. He was constantly, though all unconsciously, "cutting" people whom, if he could have recognized them, he would have been delighted to salute or to speak with. His companion in his walks and drives was always on the *qui vive* to advise him of the approach of friends or acquaintances. Once this arrangement led to comical consequences. Walking out one day they met the Prince of Wales approaching, and Lord Beaconsfield was duly informed of his approach. Close by his Royal Highness walked a commissionaire speeding on an errand, and to him Lord Beaconsfield, raising his hat, bowed with courtly grace, the prince passing unobserved.

At the Bloomsbury Square epoch he seems to have been in a state of health

that caused great anxiety both to himself and his friends. In November, 1829, he writes that he is "desperately ill," and at one time his life appears to have been despaired of. In a letter to Mrs. Austen, dated from Bradenham House, 7th of March, 1830 (quoted in the *Quarterly Review*), he says of himself, that he cannot be worse; that of all places London was the one least suited to him, and that solitude and silence do not make his existence easy, but they make it endurable.

My plans about leaving England are more unsettled than ever. I anticipate no benefit from it, nor from anything else; but I am desirous of quitting England, that I may lead even a more recluse life than I do at present, and emancipate myself from perpetual commiseration. When I was in town last I consulted many eminent men. I received from them no consolation. . . . I grieve to say my hair grows very badly, and, I think, more gray, which I can unfeignedly declare occasions me more anguish than even the prospect of death.

Later on he described himself as being in a constant state of stupor, and unable to write a line without the greatest effort. He passed a whole week in a sort of trance, sleeping daily sixteen out of the twenty-four hours. He complained of giddiness in the head, and palpitation of the heart. He had, he said, given up all idea of the East, and doubted whether, even if the opportunity offered, he would have the strength and spirit to avail himself of it; and he ends his letter by begging his correspondent to consider him his "deceased, though sincere friend."

Mr. Austen insisted upon his carrying out his cherished desire of visiting the East, and, it is more than probable, provided him with the necessary funds, which must, considering the style in which he travelled, have reached a formidable sum. He seems to have set sail for Gibraltar from London. However it be, the first of the "Home Letters," addressed to "my dear Sa," is dated from the Royal Hotel, Falmouth, June 1st, 1830, and announces "our arrival here this morning at four o'clock, instead of Sunday, having had a very rough passage indeed, the wind ahead the whole time." He was accompanied by Mr. Meredith, a gentleman engaged to be married to "my dear Sa," and who died at Cairo on the return journey.

The account of this expedition is given in the "Home Letters," a very charming narrative, in literary style perhaps the best work from his pen, being free from the affectation which later labored it. The

letters show Disraeli at his very best—gay, audacious, popular, with a good conceit of himself, and endowed with a keen eye for beauty of scenery or phases of character. Throughout the journey the mysterious illness which beset him is frequently alluded to. From Gibraltar he writes:—

The air of the mountains, the rising sun, the rising appetite, the variety of picturesque persons and things we met, and the impending danger, made a delightful life; and had it not been for the great enemy, I should have given myself up entirely to the magic of the life—but that spoiled all. It is not worse—sometimes I think it lighter about the head—but the palpitation about the heart greatly increases. Otherwise my health is wonderful. Never have I been better; but what use is this when the end of all existence is debarred me? I say no more upon this melancholy subject, by which I am ever and infinitely depressed, and often most so when the world least imagines it; but to complain is useless, and to endure almost impossible; but existence is certainly less irksome in the mild distraction of this varied life.

Three months later he writes from Corfu:—

I continue much the same—still infirm, but no longer destitute of hope. I wander in pursuit of health, like the immortal exile in pursuit of the lost shore which is now almost glittering in my sight. Five years of my life have been already wasted, and sometimes I think my pilgrimage may be as long as that of Ulysses.

Writing from Cairo of the illness of his friend Meredith and of Tita, he says: "Thus, you see, the strong men have all fallen, while I who am a habitual invalid am firm on my legs." But he had benefited by his trip and begun that convalescence which finally saw the complete extinction of the enemy. "I cannot write to say I am quite well," he reports from Cairo, on the 28th of May, 1831, "because the enemy still holds out, but I am sanguine, very, and at any rate quite well enough to wish to be at home."

He had, in truth, long been homesick, and whilst crossing the Ægean Sea, he dropped into poetry. His verse is not nearly so good as his prose, but is worth quoting, partly as a curious sample of his literary work, but principally as showing him in that homely character unfamiliar to those of a later generation, who knew him as "the Asian Mystery," the political adventurer, the imperturbable statesman:—

Bright are the skies above me,  
And blue the waters roll;  
Ah! if but those that love me  
Were here, my joy were whole.  
When those we love are wanting,  
Then o'er the clouded heart  
A thousand visions haunting,  
Their darkening shadows dart.

Wild bird that fliest so lightly,  
Ah, whither dost thou roam?  
Thou art a wanderer rightly,  
Thou hast not left thy home.  
For thou, altho' thou art nestless,  
Art not so lone as he  
Whose spirit, sad and restless,  
Impels him o'er thy sea.

In this little volume, Disraeli, writing in the frankness and freedom of home conversation, sketches off a good many people, not least successfully himself. Here he is at Gibraltar rejoicing in the possession of a set of studs his mother had presented him with, which were probably very large and fine:—

It fortuitously happens to be the fashion among the dandies of Gibraltar not to wear waistcoats in the morning; so tell my mother that her new studs come into fine play, and maintain my reputation of being a great judge of costume and the admiration and envy of many subalterns.

Also, the young visitor from London, is an adept in the nice conduct of the clouded cane.

I have [he tells his father] the fame of being the first who ever passed the straits with two canes, a morning and an evening cane. I change my cane as the gun fires, and hope to carry them both on to Cairo. It is wonderful the effect these magical wands produce.

Arrived at Malta, his mother's studs have lost their pristine charm, and the evening and the morning cane no longer make a day for him.

You should see me [he writes to brother Ralph] in the costume of a Greek pirate, a blood-red shirt with silver studs as big as shillings, an immense scarf for girdle, full of pistols and daggers, red cap, red slippers, broad blue-striped jacket and trousers.

We only wish we could have seen the sight. What a priceless addition to a portrait-gallery, a finished picture of the sketch here, lightly, but graphically made!

Beneath all his frivolities and vanities, there was, even at this early age, a fixed purpose about the glittering youth.

To govern men [he writes in another letter from Malta] you must either excel them in their accomplishments or despise them. Clay does one, I do the other, and we are both equally popular. Affectation tells here even better than wit.

Then there follows a story, interesting as showing how little it took to amuse Malta:—

Yesterday at the racket court, sitting in the gallery among strangers, the ball entered and lightly struck me, and fell at my feet. I picked it up, and observing a young rifleman excessively stiff, I humbly requested him to forward its passage into the court, as I really had never thrown a ball in my life. This incident has been the general subject of conversation at all the messes to-day!

The next day, having had an interview with the governor, which he believed had been a success, "I jumped up, remembering that I must be breaking into his morning, and was off, making it a rule always to leave with a good impression." There was evidently a method in the young man's madness of affectation and occasional buffoonery.

His high spirits, his sense of humor, and his audacity, not to call it impudence, are illustrated in an account he gives of an incident in his journey through Albania. The light and rapid touch illustrates the admirable literary style of these letters already noted:—

This khan had now been turned into a military post, and here we found a young bey, to whom Kalio had given us a letter, in case of our stopping for an hour. He was a man of very pleasing exterior, but unluckily could not understand Giovanni's Greek, and had no interpreter. What was to be done? We could not go on, as there was not an inhabited place before Yanina; and here were we, sitting before sunset on the same divan with our host, who had entered the place to receive us, and would not leave the room while we were there, without the power of communicating an idea. We were in despair, and we were also very hungry, and could not therefore in the course of an hour or two plead fatigue as an excuse for sleep, for we were ravenous and anxious to know what prospect of food existed in this wild and desolate mansion. So we smoked. It is a great resource, but this wore out, and it was so ludicrous smoking, and looking at each other, and dying to talk, and then exchanging pipes by way of compliment, and then pressing our hand to our heart by way of thanks. The Bey sat in a corner, I unfortunately next, so I had the onus of mute attention, and Clay next to me; so he and M. could at least have an occasional joke, though of course we were too well-bred to exceed an occasional and irresistible observation. Clay wanted to play *écarté*, and with a grave face, as if we were at our devotions; but just as we were about commencing, it occurred to us that we had some brandy, and that we would offer our host a glass, as it might be a hint for what should follow to so vehement a schnaps. Mashallah! Had the effect only taken place

1830 years ago, instead of in the present age of scepticism, it would have been instantly voted a first-rate miracle. Our mild friend smacked his lips and instantly asked for another cup—we drank it in coffee-cups. By the time that Meredith had returned, who had left the house on pretence of shooting, Clay, our host, and myself, had despatched a bottle of brandy in quicker time and fairer proportions than I ever did a bottle of Burgundy, and were extremely gay. Then he would drink again with Meredith, and ordered some figs, talking, I must tell you, all the time, indulging in the most graceful pantomime, examining our pistols, offering us his own golden ones for our inspection, and finally making out Giovanni's Greek enough to misunderstand most ludicrously every observation we communicated. But all was taken in good part, and I never met such a jolly fellow in the course of my life.

In the mean time we were ravenous, for the dry, round, unsugary fig is a great whetter. At last we insisted upon Giovanni's communicating our wants, and asking for bread. The Bey gravely bowed, and said, "Leave it to me, take no thought," and nothing more occurred. We prepared ourselves for hungry dreams, when, to our great delight, a most capital supper was brought in, accompanied, to our great horror, by wine. We ate, we drank; we ate with our fingers, we drank in a manner I never recollect. The wine was not bad, but if it had been poison we must drink; it was such a compliment for a Moslem; we quaffed it in rivers. The Bey called for the brandy; he drank it all. The room turned round; the wild attendants who sat at our feet seemed dancing in strange and fantastic whirls; the Bey shook hands with me; he shouted English, I Greek. "Very good!" he had caught up from us; "Kalo, kalo!" was my rejoinder. He roared; I smacked him on the back. I remember no more. In the middle of the night I woke. I found myself sleeping on the divan, rolled up in its sacred carpet; the Bey had wisely reeled to the fire. The thirst I felt was like that of Dives. All were sleeping except two, who kept up during the night the great wood fire. I rose lightly, stepping over my sleeping companions, and the shining arms that here and there informed me that the dark mass wrapped up in a capote was a human being. I found Abraham's bosom in a flagon of water. I think I must have drunk a gallon at one draught. I looked at the wood fire and thought of the blazing blocks in the hall at Bradenham, asked myself whether I was indeed in the mountain fastness of an Albanian chief, and, shrugging my shoulders, went to bed and woke without a headache. We left our jolly host in regret. I gave him my pipe as a memorial of having got tipsy together.

Disraeli had adventures of another kind in Spain, once "escaping the brigands only by a moonlight scamper and a change

of route," and another time being nearly shot by an escort of a caravan, who mistook him and his party for brigands. A month or two later, instead of going to Egypt as was his ordered intention, he proceeded to Corfu, in pursuance of a plan of joining the Turkish army as a volunteer. Albania was in revolt, the grand vizier, Reschid Pacha, was in personal command of the Turkish forces, and Disraeli, fired with recollection of Byron's military expedition, seriously resolved to volunteer. There was this important distinction between his action and Lord Byron's, that, whilst the poet went to the help of a nation struggling to be free, Disraeli was drawn to throw his pistols and daggers, his red cap, his red slippers, and his silver studs, into the scale on the side of the enslaver.

He mentions the project twice, once in a letter to the gentleman then known as Edward Bulwer, and once to his friend and confidante, Mrs. Austen. He made that lady's flesh creep by the following dark sayings:—

With regard to myself I have certainly made great progress, but not enough. I have still illness to make my life a burden, and as my great friend, the sun, is daily becoming less powerful, I daily grow more dispirited, and resume my old style of despair. Had I been cured by this time I had made up my mind to join you in Italy—as it is, I go I know not where, but do not be surprised if you hear something very strange indeed.

In a succeeding letter, written from Corfu, he discloses his intention of going to the assistance of the Turkish army; a project finally abandoned, on learning that the Porte had proceeded with such surprising energy, that "the war in Albania which had begun so magnificently has already dwindled into an insurrection."

Another, and scarcely less startling scheme for disposing of his spare time which suggested itself to the restless fancy of Disraeli, was that he should become a publisher. Greville writes in his Memoirs: "Moxon told me on Wednesday that some years ago Disraeli had asked him to take him into partnership. But he refused, not thinking he was sufficiently prudent to be trusted."

Possibly Mr. Moxon had in mind John Murray's business connection with the brilliant young man and its calamities. It is amongst the least familiar facts in the early history of Disraeli that he was the founder and editor of a newspaper. It was called the *Representative*, its publisher and proprietor being John Murray,

who had determined to "put down the *Times*." I have found in an old number of the *London Magazine* some interesting particulars of this adventure. It is called "The Private History of the Rise and Fall of a Newspaper," and is evidently written by one who had intimate relations with its staff. The first number of the *Representative* appeared on January 5th, 1826, with an intimation that "the title of the paper was chosen, since it was intended to present, as in the bright reflection of a mirror, an image as faithful, as brilliant, of the political events, the literature, and the manner of the present times." But it did not realize this modest anticipation, and certainly did not succeed in its original design of putting down the *Times*. It lasted only a few months, John Murray having in the mean time had a hot quarrel with his oiled and curled young editor.

The climax of enjoyment in this first journey to the East was reached by the young Disraeli when he beheld the cupolas and minarets of Stamboul rising before him at sunset, and "felt an excitement which," aged at twenty-five, he "thought was dead." Writing to Edward Bulwer, he says:—

I confess to you that my Turkish prejudices are very much confirmed by my residence in Turkey. The life of this people greatly accords to my taste. To repose on voluptuous divans and smoke superb pipes; daily to indulge in the luxuries of a bath which requires half-a-dozen attendants for its perfection; to court the air in a carved caïque, by shores which are a perpetual scene, and to find no exertion greater than a canter on a barb: this is, I think, a far more sensible life than the bustle of clubs, all the boring of drawing-rooms, and all the coarse vulgarity of our political controversies.

He seems to have made up his mind to be a Turk, and went so far as to wear a turban, add many lengths to his pipe, and practise sitting on a divan. One Mehemet Pacha quite won his heart by telling him he could not be an Englishman, but was rather one of Eastern race, "because he walked so slowly." Those who knew him half a century later will remember how this peculiarity marked him to the last. There were few things in a small way more impressive in the House of Commons than to witness Mr. Disraeli's approach to the table after returning from the division lobby. With head slightly bent, he glided with long slow stride down the very centre of the floor, bowing with stately grace to the speaker. Whether

coming in after a crushing defeat or returning after an important victory he never varied his measured gait, the more remarkable among the hurrying throng of the House after a division.

In degrees the same peculiarity was noticeable out of doors. One who walked behind him up Parliament Street, one afternoon at the beginning of 1878, thus described his appearance:—

Taken at a back view it would not be thought he was a very old man. He was smartly dressed in a coat new as the year. In gracious recognition of this spring day that had strayed into winter weather, the garment was of light grey, with trousers to match. A blue necktie and lavender kid gloves—over which mittens were drawn, since it was not yet quite spring—completed an attire remarkable on any person on this particular day. But the wearer was himself a notable man. He walked erect with a certain swinging pace. But his progress was slow, and there was a curious hesitation about lifting his feet, which suggested that his boots were soled with lead. Then his face was very old, leaden in hue, and with deeply furrowed lines by the side of his mouth, which was adorned by a little patch of hair, supernaturally black, just covering the portion of his upper lip immediately under the nostrils, like an "imperial" transplanted. He was evidently engrossed in deepest thought, regarding passing events with lack-lustre eyes, and with a mind that was far away. Many people who passed raised their hats in salutation. Sometimes when he caught the motion he mechanically bent his head in acknowledgment; but oftener he did not see, and walked steadily on.

Reference is made in his night's adventure with the bibulous bey to his giving his host his pipe. At this period of his life the pipe was a constant companion of the young Disraeli and figures largely in his correspondence.

I have [he writes from Cairo] become a most accomplished smoker; carrying the luxurious art to a pitch of refinement of which Ralph has no idea. My pipe is cooled in a wet silken bag, my coffee is boiled with spices, and I finish my last chibouque with a sherbet and pomegranate.

At Smyrna he ascribes to the fine weather and to smoking, the continued improvement of his health. From Athens he declares that he does not care for privations in respect of food, "as I have always got my pipe."

More than twenty years before his death the pipe, cherished companion of his blooming youth, was laid aside, and Mr. Disraeli gave up the habit of smoking. Occasionally, in certain company, he would



smoke a cigar, but did not particularly care for it. He brought home the pipes which figure so prominently in his correspondence from the East, and one day presented them to a friend who still keeps them among his most treasured relics. It is characteristic of Disraeli that he christened his pipes in magniloquent fashion. One he called "Bosphorus," and the other "Sultan," as if they were iron-clad line-of-battle ships. The stems are fully eight feet long, made of wood covered with fluted silk, gorgeous to behold when young Disraeli sat on his divan and sipped his spiced coffee and toyed with the sherbet of pomegranate. But to-day they are woefully faded, the heavy amber mouth-pieces are cracked and chipped, and the inadequately small bowl, which looks more like ordinary clay than the porcelain Disraeli's fancy pictured, has lost some of its fittings.

Sherbet and coffee were only occasional distractions at this time, for then, and, I believe, to the end of his life, Disraeli's favorite drink was Burgundy. Contemplating making an important speech he liked to take the precaution of a bottle of Burgundy. Dining nearly forty years later with Sir Charles Burrell, he incidentally mentions a duke or two among the guests, and adds, "The best guests, however, were turtle, whitebait, venison, and Burgundy."

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From Temple Bar.

SOPHY.

#### CHAPTER I.

I AM very far from intending to tell my own story, and shall accordingly be as short as I can on matters which only concern myself, but I must mention that I lived to the age of thirty-nine, without ever supposing I should have to take service; however, at that date, my father, a market gardener in a fair-seeming way of business, died bankrupt, and I was thankful when by means of my kind friend and godmother, Mrs. Brand, I got the situation of young-ladies' maid to the two Miss Laghis, stepdaughters to Mr. Charlesworth of Sweetfields. Mrs. Brand was the vicar's wife at Maddersley; Sweetfields lies just within the south-eastern boundaries of Upper Maddersley. I had often looked through those palings as I went by, and thought that with the little stream threading it, and sloping lawns and stretch of field land and cool fir walk, Sweetfields,

to those who called it home, must be indeed a pleasant place. It is my home now, and I know that the idea did not mislead me.

When I first went to Sweetfields, Mr. Charlesworth was a new bridegroom, yet past his forty-fifth year; a bookish, dreamy gentlemen, to whom not a soul in Maddersley, though talk of the kind is as well liked there as anywhere else, had once thought of giving a wife. He met the lady of his choice at Torquay; she was a widow, some ten years younger than himself, and had been twice married, first as a mere girl to an Italian silk-merchant, Alessandro Laghi; her second name was Blay. The only child of the second marriage had died in infancy; of the other, there were two daughters, Miss Laghis, and these young ladies Mr. Charlesworth and their mother had determined to establish at Sweetfields with a governess and a few servants, while they made a stay of a year or it might be more (and so afterwards proved) in foreign parts. There were cook and housemaid, with a strong girl under them to help in the work of both, and a boy, in a livery jacket, to wait and answer the bell; these, with myself, made up our number indoors, and turned out to be quite sufficient; no company was kept, the young ladies being still in the schoolroom. Miss Delamayn, the governess whom Mrs. Charlesworth had engaged for them, came one day, her pupils the next; I believe we all looked on one another a little doubtfully at first; it was an awkwardness that soon wore off. But now I must not go any further, without giving some description of Lauretta and Sophy — so my young mistresses were called.

Lauretta had just turned her seventeenth year. She was short and plump, with the prettiest dimpled arms and hands I ever saw, and very little feet. I should exaggerate, perhaps, if I were to call her a beauty, but at any rate, it was impossible to look at her without pleasure. She had features of infantine softness, a peachy complexion which got a sprinkling of freckles as the summer heats came on, reddish hair, not in any great quantity, but what there was of it soft as silk, and tending to curl; small, sleepy hazel eyes, twinkling into starry brightness when she laughed or was eager over anything; add to this, a look of simplicity and dependency on others and a trick of biting in her under lip, and you have Lauretta, as far as outward appearance goes, complete.

You would never have taken Sophy for

her sister. She was two years the younger, taller than Lauretta, yet not tall; very strongly made. To tell the truth, the first time I saw her, with her marked meagre cast of face, and sallow skin and dark burning eyes, I thought her like nothing so much as one of those poor wandering Italian boys we see here, earning their chance coppers about our doors; she was more chary of her smiles than they are, but when she did smile, the effect was the same, a brilliant beautiful flash, teeth of pearl showing, the whole countenance altering in a moment. Both Lauretta and Sophy were very childish in some respects, totally unacquainted with the notions of any part of life beyond that narrow one which had been their own; they had grown up under the roof of their mother's uncle, who, it seemed, had a farm in a wild corner of Kent; their mother, since she married her second husband, and Sophy was then but three years old, had been almost a stranger to them. He was a spendthrift and a rogue, Miss Delamayn told me; they separated at the end of a few years, and Mrs. Blay, as she was at that time, took to living with ladies in need of a companion; she was in some such post when Mr. Charlesworth met and married her at Torquay. Mr. Blay had been dead two years. Money being scarce, and no female relative with them at the farm, these girls had but three frocks apiece, of which one was unfit to wear and the best by no means new; their underclothing was in a sad state of disrepair, though Sophy, the active one of the sisters, had cobbled the rents, after a fashion, for herself and Lauretta too. I was glad to find that Miss Delamayn had been allowed a handsome sum for the replenishing of their wardrobes. Lauretta went half crazy with delight over her new attire; Sophy was charmed to see Lauretta dressed, and indifferent as to her own part in the business; she had, with the muscular strength and something the appearance of a boy, tastes and habits to correspond. Riding, cricket, venturous climbing, shooting at a mark, the rearing of young animals, — these, I gathered, had been her favorite pursuits, Lauretta sharing in them, as far as she was able, and contented to be outshone. The affection between the two was something extraordinary; though of such different dispositions, they lived in perfect sympathy and the most intimate understanding of one another. Sophy's passion for her sister seemed the more remarkable, because she did not easily

attach herself to any one, acting as if she had fully enough in Lauretta's love, but the elder girl was soft-hearted and caressing and made friends with readiness; Miss Delamayn preferred her far above Sophy, as was natural; Sophy was my favorite.

Mr. and Mrs. Charlesworth had been married just a year, when a child was born to them, a daughter; I felt pretty certain that they would bring the infant to England as soon as prudence allowed, but I was mistaken. Another year went over, and Miss Delamayn and I began to look at the blooming, fully developed Lauretta, now past nineteen, and wonder how long she and Sophy were to be left to their studies and seclusion, when a change came. Mrs. Charlesworth died at Nice, a town in southern France, of a sudden inflammation on the lungs; Mr. Charlesworth, writing home, announced his intention of returning at once to Sweetfields with his child; the lady who had enjoyed her ease and variety of diversions such a short while, was to be buried abroad. Something happened, however, which obliged Mr. Charlesworth to alter his plan. Sophy sickened with scarlet fever; Miss Delamayn at once took Lauretta away to lodgings in Maddersley, while I remained in charge of the younger girl. As soon as it became surely evident that she had not caught the infection, Lauretta joined her stepfather at Fontainebleau, near Paris.

Sophy was long and violently ill; the doctor who attended her, had more fears for her than I could share in; at the highest of the fever, and later, when extreme weakness followed it, I never felt death near, and I was right. She recovered, and as soon as she grew strong enough, the doctor ordered her to the sea; it was arranged that she should go for six weeks to Deal, under my sole care. By the time we left Sweetfields, spring was drawing into summer; Mr. Charlesworth had sent his agent orders to have the house done up from roof to basement, while we were away; at the end of June, or beginning of July, it was expected that he would return there, and Lauretta, of course, with him. Keeping this reunion with her sister, which was no longer so very distant, steadily in view, Sophy bore her loneliness with a great deal of patience; we contrived to make out some happy hours at Deal, and the girl's native vigor came back to her apace. Her looks were improved by her illness; she had gained in height; her skin was more clear and her features seemed softer; a blush of red

showed in her cheeks, which used to be singularly colorless; in a word, Sophy began to grow handsome, but with no more consciousness of her person or wish to excite admiration than formerly.

One afternoon, about a week before we came away from Deal, I had left Sophy happily absorbed, as I thought, in a letter from Lauretta, and busied myself in the kitchen, getting the tea. As I returned, Sophy met me at the door of our parlor, with a pale face and her large eyes staring wistfully and half frightened out of it. I set down the tray in a hurry, and then without a word, she put the letter into my hand. I enquired if I was to read it; she made a sign in the affirmative and walked out of the room.

"MY OWN DARLING SIS, — [Lauretta wrote] — My precious one, how *can* I *write* you my great news? you will be surprised, I know, and so was I, for I am not a hundredth part good enough or clever enough, darling. I am engaged to be married to Mr. Grandire. I have mentioned him several times, you know, and described him a little, but not nearly nice enough, he is *quite* perfect. We have often talked about my Sis, and he is going to love you exactly like a sister, and I seem to love my Sis and long for her more than I did before. *You must love him* and be sweet to him, or it will spoil all for me. His name is Henry, but I have not called him by it yet. He is *very particular* and difficult to please, I can't think why he likes silly me. He has a *castle* in Ireland; fancy you and me in a castle! It is post-time, so I must stop. Papa's love, little Lulu's too, our sweet weeny sister; good-bye, darling, mind you write directly and put some kisses in and tell me you're glad for

"Your lovingest

"LAURY."

I read this scrawl, for it was no better, three or four times through, and I was still sitting and looking at it when Sophy came in again. She continued very pale, and had a kind of fixed serenity in her expression; I told her I hoped she would feel able to take part in Lauretta's joy, and she answered gravely, "Yes, Ellen, I am glad for Laury's sake; Laury always thought it must be a good thing to get married." With this speech she began and ended; I do not believe I heard her allude to the subject again.

I need scarcely say that Mr. Grandire did not appear in the eyes of other people as the angel Lauretta painted him. He

was a rather dark young man of four or five and twenty, with a melancholy brow and quiet manners. I saw little of him, but, when I had the opportunity, I studied his face carefully, and I thought I could read a difficult exacting temper in the lines of it. I am aware now, from after experience of the gentleman's ways, that my opinion was correct. Sunny, manageable little Lauretta was made for his happiness; his eye lightened when it rested on her, and, for her part, she fairly adored him. He exerted himself to get intimate with Sophy, but not very successfully; there remained always a certain distance between them, which neither his attempts to please her, nor Sophy's determined civility, did much to lessen; fortunately for Lauretta, she was not quick-sighted, and so long as her lover and her sister appeared like friends, made herself quite content.

I found a new phase of things at Sweetfields; the household was put back on its former footing, and Miss Louisa Charlesworth's foreign maid having been suddenly detected in a serious piece of misconduct, Mr. Charlesworth got such a fright, that nothing else would suit him but I must undertake the superintendence of the nursery. I had a steady girl under me, and so was not obliged to give up attending on my young ladies.

Now, hoping to be excused for the broken haphazard way in which I write, I shall travel on to the first week in September. The thirtieth day of that month was fixed for the wedding. Mr. Grandire being a rich man, and with no one's pleasure to consult beyond his own, there was no reason for deferring it; but as Lauretta and Sophy were still in mourning for their mother, the ceremony was to be perfectly private and quiet. Mr. Grandire was staying in London. Maddersley is almost a suburban place, thirteen miles from town by rail; he came down three or four times a week. Sophy's unjealous satisfaction in the spectacle of Lauretta's felicity outwent my best expectations; I trusted that as time went on, she and Mr. Grandire would somehow get drawn closer together. Thus serenely then were we situated, and I am sure no presentiment of disaster troubled any of us. Alas, it was close at hand!

#### CHAPTER II.

ONE evening when Mr. Grandire was coming to dinner, I went into the young ladies' room at six o'clock. Dinner was not till half past seven, but Lauretta, I

knew, would want to be dressed early; Mr. Grandire was expected in half an hour. The sisters had gone together for a stroll down Mill Lane, the narrow country-looking road, with no way for carriages, into which two doors opened from the grounds of Sweetfields; one at the end of the fir walk, the other nearer the house. I was surprised not to see them returned, for Lauretta had only accompanied Sophy on the understanding that their walk was not to extend beyond a quarter of a mile. However, I concluded that the beauty of the evening, mild as midsummer, and bathed in the last light of the sun, had tempted them to linger, and so many thoughts were busy within me, I did not tire of waiting or notice enough how time slipped away, until I started to hear Lauretta's new French clock, a present from an aunt of Mr. Grandire, strike the half-hour; then I had a sensation of uneasiness, but, nearly at the same moment, there were steps along the passage, and the young ladies came in.

Lauretta's face was disfigured with crying, almost past recognition; she turned it away as soon as she saw me, and walked to one of the windows, where she stood, looking out. Sophy had shed no tears, but the faint flush her cheeks wore, when I saw her start with Lauretta, was deepened to crimson; she had not so much sorrow as a kind of violence in her altered aspect, something I cannot give any notion of in words; it alarmed me more than the traces of Lauretta's passionate weeping.

"My dears!" I could but exclaim—"Miss Lauretta!—Miss Sophy!—is there bad news?"

"There is no news, Ellen," said Sophy, composedly taking off her hat and gloves and laying them on a chair. "Laury, it is twenty-five minutes to seven; get dressed."

I saw that for once I was not to be confided in, so, though I still felt my heart flutter with dismay, I said no more. The business of dressing was proceeded with as usual, only in dreary silence. I put some rosewater in Lauretta's hand-basin, and, with infinite pains, she succeeded after a time in restoring her delicate complexion to something more like its natural hues; but when she was at last all ready to go down to her lover, she suddenly faltered, trembled, gave a piteous look at Sophy, and, sinking down on the end of her bed, burst again into tears.

"Miss Laury!" I cried—"Miss Laury, love, what ails you?"

"It's nothing—nothing, Ellen," she

protested through her sobs; then, as if seeing the folly of her words, "It's my head—oh, my head aches so!" she said. "What shall I do?"

I glanced towards Sophy, who stood a little aloof, with her eyes straight before her, and that same dreadful bitter look working in her features.

"Miss Sophy," I said vehemently, "I can't bear to see you look so; there must be something wrong in your heart to come out like that!" I scarcely knew what I said, but boldness never offended Sophy.

"My heart! I am not thinking about my heart, Ellen," she answered half absently. "Please," she added, "you had better leave us."

I saw her gather Lauretta maternally to her (she was always the leader and protector of the two), and I hurried away to the nursery with the contagion of a woe I could not even guess at, strong in my breast. Celia, my nursemaid, said I looked cold.

"Miss Lulu is in the drawing-room," she went on. "The master came and fetched her himself, and you are to go for her, Mrs. Wilson, at twenty minutes past seven."

When I went down the young ladies had not appeared. Mr. Grandire stood on the hearth-rug in front of a new-lit fire, all impatience and perplexity, as I could see, although he was for preserving his usual rather formal demeanor. I could not wonder that he felt doubtful what to think, for his simple Lauretta would usually fly to him the moment she knew he was in the house. Mr. Charlesworth was on the sofa at some game with his little girl, equally delightful to both. The precocious elf-like child shook her head when she saw me, and very intelligibly declared that she did not mean to go up in the nursery with Ellen. Her father could never bear to see her thwarted, and I was fruitlessly trying to persuade her with promises, when the door opened, on which Mr. Grandire's wearying eyes were fixed, and Lauretta and Sophy, in their black silk frocks, entered hand in hand.

It was still very evident that Lauretta had been crying, but as her face sprang into smiles and a flush of emotion at the sight of her lover, those marks on her face showed less. Mr. Grandire saw them, however, and surveyed her anxiously, retaining her hand while he exchanged a proper greeting with Sophy, who the next moment joined me by the sofa. Lulu had a partiality for her black-haired step-sister, unaccountable to me; Sophy I

thought treated the child in a manner quite out of keeping with her infant years; but so it was, and now, docile directly, and well pleased, she left her pretended carriage for Sophy's arms, and let herself be taken up-stairs without a single cross word or cry. I followed in silence.

I have been particular in recounting my impressions of that evening, because a marked change in the behavior and spirits of the young ladies dated from it. Mr. Grandire, it so happened, had been obliged to make his visit one of farewell, if the term be not too solemn, when he was only to remain away two weeks. Some disaster occurring on his Irish property, he was urgently needed there, and whatever Mr. Grandire's faults of temper may be, certainly he was never known to put inclination before duty. Every one in the house, but myself, ascribed Lauretta's constant dejection to his absence. Mr. Charlesworth rallied her mildly; Miss Delamayn thought it right to show her the sinfulness of giving way to such overstrained sentimental sorrow. Lauretta listened languidly without denying the charge; I felt sure that it went far wide.

She continued to weep in secret — that is, when alone with Sophy; for the two were more inseparable than ever, and her round face got a look of care very strange to it; even her bright bloom seemed fading. Sophy did not bear about her any such unmistakable marks of suffering as Lauretta; but I, knowing her so well, saw that the trouble was divided between them, as indeed it could not be otherwise. They withdrew themselves a great deal, and in the few country walks they took, wanted neither other society nor attendance. Miss Delamayn remarked that she supposed it was natural they should make the most of what short time they had left to spend together in the old way, and so everything combined to prevent their conduct from appearing inexplicably singular. I was the only one who suspected a mystery, and tired myself out with unaided melancholy conjectures; my waking hours were overcast; all the dreams I had, miserable.

In this way, more than half the time of Mr. Grandire's stay in Ireland had gone by, when on a Sunday evening, at about six o'clock, I was returning from the new cemetery, where I had been to lay a cross of white dahlia on my father's grave; it was his birthday. As I came to the top of Mill Lane, I saw Sophy issue quickly from the gate of an untenanted farmhouse belonging to Mr. Charlesworth, which

stood on the opposite side of the road — opposite, that is, to Sweetfields. I say untenanted; an old woman and her granddaughter lived there as caretakers, but I knew that they were in the habit of shutting the place up early on Sunday morning, and going to spend the day with relations in Maddersley; they would not return before night. I began to wonder with a strange thrill what had taken Sophy at this hour into the neglected, lonely garden of the farm, and then I rebuked myself, for I knew that but for my rooted notion of something amiss, I should have thought little of seeing her there. She waited for me to join her, which helped to reassure me, and I noticed directly an irrepressible animation in her air and a particular gleaming of her dark eyes; she appeared elate. But soon, as I walked by her side, I found that her frock and mantle were faintly impregnated with the smell of tobacco, and very bad tobacco too; this may seem a trivial thing, yet it brought back all my nameless apprehensions.

"Miss Sophy, dear," I said as quietly as I could, "where can you have been to get so unpleasantly scented?"

Sophy started.

"You need not walk with me then, Ellen," she replied after a moment, standing still and raising her head with a proud air; but her bosom panted — "you can go on."

She signed with her hand.

"Miss Sophy," I said, stopping too (this was a quiet road always, and now entirely deserted), "you are cruel, pretending to misunderstand me. I thought you considered me a friend, a very humble one, I know, but feelings —" I could say no more, I walked quickly on.

Sophy followed me. Her masterful little hand came pushing through my arm.

"How foolish, Ellen!" she said. "Of course we are friends. There — don't let us talk any more!"

I had to be satisfied with this reconciliation; explanation was not to be looked for.

Lauretta and Sophy were closeted together for nearly an hour, when the younger girl came in, and from that time I saw Lauretta, there was no mistaking it, raise up her head like a revived flower; back came the frequent laugh and the airy demeanor, and the sweet colors, and all the gay, idle ways. Sophy shared in the relief, after her undemonstrative fashion, the cloud cleared off suddenly and secretly as it had arisen; and now was I too at ease? I cannot say so.



## CHAPTER III.

It was about at this time that we heard of young Mr. French being expected at Sweetfields. He was the son of Mr. Charlesworth's only sister, who had died early, leaving this one boy. An out-of-the-way name he had — Fabian. The father was an Englishman by birth and breeding, but after his wife's death had gone over to America, where he was one of the partners in a thriving mercantile concern. I had often sat looking at tall, blue-eyed Miss Eglantine Charlesworth in Maddersley church, when I was a growing girl and she a charming young lady; I used to admire her past everything, and now felt a curious interest in the thought of seeing her son. I little dreamed what manner of meeting our first one was to be.

Mr. Grandire returned, the days passed on wings, we found ourselves at the 27th of September — the wedding, as I said before, was appointed for the thirtieth.

Well, that twenty-seventh! It opened tranquilly enough. Mr. Grandire came down early in the morning, and at twelve o'clock drove Lauretta over to Kingsferry, a town six miles from Maddersley, where they were to pay a long-promised visit to an invalid lady, an old friend of the Charlesworth family. Mr. Charlesworth accompanied them. Sophy was invited, but she begged off from the expedition. Mr. French, I must not forget to say, had written that he should arrive at his uncle's house on the twenty-eighth. I myself had a trifling yet necessary purchase to make in Maddersley; in fact, I wanted to match the trimming of the silver-grey gown I had made for Lauretta's wedding, with two dozen of small buttons, some which I had bought, inconsiderately attracted by a prettiness in the shape, turning out to be of too light a color. I gave Lulu her tea at five, left her with a new picture-book on Celia's lap, and set briskly forth, a little disappointed that Sophy, being alone, had not come up to ask for a cup of tea in the nursery. Miss Delamayn had gone to see a married sister in London. It was a cloudy chill evening as if tending to rain; I walked so fast, for though stoutish, I was yet very active, that by the time I got to Field's, a high-class draper's shop, right opposite the Maddersley parish church, I felt myself all in a glow. I stood a minute at the window, and then turning to pass in, became aware that a man whom I noticed lounging along the street as I came up, had stopped at a short distance from me, and was making me the object of

a fixed, uncivilly attentive stare. I felt puzzled, but I was too old to be embarrassed or distressed; I gave him a steady look, which he returned with a half-repressed, meaning smile, and seemed for a moment as if he were going to speak, hesitated however, and finally turned on his heel and walked on at his former slow, swaggering pace.

His appearance, before this oddness in his behavior drew my notice, had struck me disagreeably; he looked about thirty, was dressed smartly in new clothes, he had an ill-bred air yet an undeniable handsomeness about him too; a square, upright figure, and red-and-white-complexioned face with a brown bushy moustache and darker hair. He walked away, and I persuaded myself that he might not be entirely sober, and so put the matter out of my head. My father's old friend, Mr. Field, came to the counter himself. I had soon selected the right buttons, but could not get away without going round into the parlor to chat awhile with his wife; thus more time went by than I knew, as I found when I came out again and looked at the church clock. I hurried back between the lamps and lighted shops of Maddersley, and through the duller streets of Upper Maddersley, and on along the bit of lonely, meadow-skirted highroad, from which a byway (leading down, if one followed it further, to the corner of Mill Lane) took me in less than five minutes round to the servants' entrance of Sweetfields.

I do not know why, but I no sooner got inside the house, than, seeing Rose Miller, the under housemaid, I inquired after Sophy.

"Miss Sophy is out," said Rose, and as I exclaimed in surprise — "Miss Sophy is only gone in the grounds," she added: "she is so fond of being out at twilight." This was true.

I found Lulu in a restless, fretty mood; I knew she would not sleep if I put her to bed like that; so, with her arms round my neck and her flaxen head nestling in it, down we came into the hall, to listen for the carriage; it was expected every minute. Lulu, now at the height of contentment, began making a little singing sound, not unlike some hedge-birds, a sure sign that she was happy; I walked her up and down, regretting to feel my burden so light, Lulu was the slenderest child I ever had to do with. Suddenly she cried out, "Wheels! wheels!" I could not hear them so soon, but at the same moment some one rang the front-door bell; the

footman ran to open it, and there, in the light of the great lamp, stood an unlooked-for, dismaying apparition — a young man mortally pale, yet his face wore a smile; he had his coat open, and a handkerchief held against his breast, streaming with blood.

I confess my first thought was to keep the tender infant in my arms from seeing the blood; I must have seemed to act like a person distracted with terror, as I flew up the stairs. I merely pushed Lulu screaming with disappointment into Celia's arms, and bade the girl keep the nursery door fast till I returned; then I ran back to the hall.

I had known the wounded youth the instant I set eyes on him; no one who had seen his mother as a girl could mistake those features, the peculiarly blue eye and elegant make of figure; it was Mr. Charlesworth's nephew, Fabian French. I got to the hall again, as he just sat down on one of the oaken chairs; I told Gibbons to fetch some brandy, and supported Mr. French as best I could, for he was half fainting, yet he spoke and thanked me with a great deal of courtesy.

I thought Gibbons dawdled intolerably, though the poor fellow, I believe, really made all the haste he could, and was not gone above two or three minutes; however, before I had the brandy, Mr. French fell in a dead swoon. Gibbons cried out he was dead indeed, but I knew better than that, while I put the brandy to his lips, and, the whole household getting now astir, Mrs. Parpworth, the cook, brought cold wet linen, and the silly girls in the servants' hall set up a shrieking and sobbing which we could hear quite plainly. In the middle of this scene, the carriage dashed up to the door; Miss Delamayn was there too; in a moment the hall appeared full of people, and all was distress, confusion, aimless movement, crossing half-heard talk. Mr. Grandire did best; hearing that the coachman had already ridden off to Maddersley for a doctor, he ruled down the miserable bustle, sent the servants, with the exception of Gibbons and myself, from the spot, requested Lauretta, who had behaved very creditably, to take hysterical Miss Delamayn into the drawing-room, and himself, with the assistance of Gibbons, carried Mr. French straight up to bed. Mr. Charlesworth I pitied sincerely; he leant against the wall of the passage as we entered Mr. French's room, trembling in an agony of concern. "His father's only child!" he repeated several times despairingly. It was evident

that with the unaccustomed signs of a violent accident before his eyes, he at once, without waiting for opinion or examination, gave the young man over for lost. All these things take more time to describe than they did in the happening; it was not really long before Mr. French recovered consciousness, and by the time Dr. Springwater (the gentleman who had attended Sophy) and a surgeon from Maddersley hospital, arrived together, he was well able to speak. They gave a good account of the injury, which was a pistol-shot wound, a little below the neck, on the left side — of a simple nature, I think they said; but what satisfied Mr. Charlesworth more than anything else, was their telling him that he need not alarm old Mr. French or inform him of the event, except lightly in the usual way of letter-writing. When Mr. Charlesworth heard them say this, he could breathe and look about him again, and the whole house in a less degree felt the same; a weight on all spirits was as if moved away.

The first moment I got time to sit down and think, my mind darted to Sophy. She had not shown herself. Lulu, tired out, was sleeping quietly in her crib. I wanted to find my other charge; since her illness, Sophy always appeared to me a little in that light. I went and knocked at the young ladies' door.

"Come in," said Lauretta's voice; she was standing at the mirror, trying to fix some chrysanthemums in her hair. Sophy, still in the short black-and-white plaid cloak, and knitted cap, which she usually wore in the garden, knelt by the window. I told her that dinner, which had been put off, would be ready in ten minutes; she turned round.

"There is plenty of time," she said.

"I don't like chrysanthemums," remarked Lauretta; "they look made-up. I like myself better without them; what do you say, Ellen?"

"The white relieves your black, miss," I said; "let me arrange them for you." While I did so, I noticed how dull Sophy looked, as if over-fatigued.

"Have you potted out the mignonette you promised me from your garden, Sis?" Lauretta inquired.

"Yes," said Sophy.

"You lamb! Do you think it will thrive?"

"Yes," said Sophy again.

Lauretta looked quickly round at her sister. "Are you grieving for papa?" she asked. "So would I indeed, but he is quite cheerful now; I heard Dr. Spring-

water say it was only a matter of some pain and a little time, and men ought not to mind pain, you know, and Mr. French has nothing to do; his time doesn't signify."

"I am not grieving," said Sophy steadily. "I have not tender enough feelings for that. Ellen looks as if she did not believe me, but it is true, nevertheless."

Lauretta sat down on her lap.

"I asked papa if we should put it off," she said (she alluded to the wedding), "but he said no. You'll kiss Henry—won't you, Sis?—afterwards."

"I don't mind," said Sophy gently, "if it is the custom."

"Ellen!" cried Lauretta in a sudden rapture; "will you look at this darling?"

"I am sorry to see Miss Sophy rather pale," I said.

Lauretta touched her rosy fingers to Sophy's cheek.

"Henry says you will be a beauty some day," she half whispered. "When you are with us, I shall give balls, and every one will be saying, 'Who is that peerless girl?' and the answer will be: 'Don't you know? Mrs. —'" here Lauretta blushed, but went boldly on—"Mrs. Grandire's sister."

"Henry is wondering where you are," said Sophy.

"Let him wonder a minute longer, then," Lauretta replied.

Sophy had been sitting quite still, until now, she embraced Lauretta with a burst of emotion such as she very seldom showed.

"Oh, Laury!" she cried, almost wildly. "Laury! Laury! Laury!"

#### CHAPTER IV.

MR. FRENCH'S story was as follows. To begin with, he arrived in London a day sooner than he had expected. Some delay arising at the station there, about his luggage, he left his valet to bring it by the next train, and himself came straight down to Maddersley. He walked from the station. He had stayed at Sweetfields as a child, so knew the place well, and when he reached the turning which leads into Mill Lane, the fancy seized him to take that way instead of bearing on along the Cranley highroad and entering by the front gates. "I wanted to surprise you all," he said to his uncle, "well—I succeeded. I loitered down Mill Lane, I crossed the bridge; I came to the door into Fir Walk. It used to be kept locked; I found it ajar. I walked in. I wondered if it could be the same place; I remem-

bered a forest. I pushed down through the plantation till I got to a sort of little open space; I caught a glimpse of the house from there; I stared at the house—I was leaning, you must understand, against a tree, in a sentimental attitude I dare say—I heard nothing, saw nothing, then or afterwards, but the next thing I knew, I had a bullet in me."

Mr. Charlesworth, as may be supposed, made all the efforts imaginable to trace this mysterious disaster to its origin; his pains were lost; nothing could be discovered. Mr. French, of course, had looked about here and there, on finding he was shot, but the fir-trees closing pretty thickly round the place where he described himself to have stood, the hour, too, that of evening, an adroit person would be very likely to evade his solitary search; it was cut short, moreover, by his disabled condition and altogether the escape of the culprit, at that moment, could not surprise us. The privacy of the place and absence of motive gave the thing a plain character of accident; malice or intent to rob being equally out of the question. Mr. Grandire was convinced that some scapegrace boy had been trespassing in the fir walk, with his eye on the small game, owls or rabbits; this had the sound of a credible supposition, and as time went on, Mr. Charlesworth was obliged to content himself with it, and even offered a free pardon to any one who should come forward and confess himself as such a trespasser and the unwitting cause of Mr. French's wound; the offer fell on silence.

As for Mr. French, he took the whole affair very lightly. Young as he was, barely past twenty-one, he had already been about the world a good deal, and some strange rough experiences had fallen to his lot. I was often in the room, waiting on him; he liked to talk, and his conversation was something new to me. He had gay spirits which confinement and forced inaction could not exhaust; a tongue, he used how he pleased; a giving hand; a look so attractive, children loved him directly; fanciful, reserved, little Lulu courted his kisses.

It was a pity he could not be present at Lauretta's wedding; his liveness was sadly wanted on the occasion. Mr. Grandire's agitation made him nervous and stiff; his cousin, who came with him as groomsman, was shy; only Lauretta smiled, pretty as a rosebud. Sophy's picture would have done almost as well as her presence, she kept so silent and unapproachably grave; Mr. Charlesworth

did not fill the post of official father to the bride gracefully, though, as we all knew, he had shown her enough paternal kindness in fact; Miss Delamayn seemed endeavoring to compose a suitable countenance, but unable to please herself; Lulu had a fit of crying in the church, and scattered her bouquet in shreds on the floor; I could have wept as I attempted to soothe her, I felt unutterably sad.

Well, however, we got done with it. Mr. Grandire's face had a ray of secure happiness as he put Lauretta into the carriage, I found afterwards she had promised Sophy not to shed tears at the last, and she kept her word; I could see it cost her a struggle, but Mr. Grandire, just at the right moment, kissing Sophy and reminding her that at the end of three months she was to be their guest in Ireland, Lauretta suddenly was all joy again, and so these two parted.

And now Sophy's character showed, as it were, a new face; I do not know what other expression to use. The lonely, uncomplaining humor which no one but Lauretta could really understand or influence, forsook her; she grew very gentle in these days, I had almost said submissive; her voice took a less decided tone; her eyes got a pensive, shadowy look. Miss Delamayn said, "Sophy is improving extremely," and the change might be a good one in some respects, but it did not entirely please me. For one thing, I had an odd sensation as if something in the Sophy I knew had been extinguished, and I wanted her back as she used to be, if but for one day; for another, she was gradually but steadily losing flesh.

Mr. French made a very quick recovery, and perhaps you feel a little curious to know how this young gentleman and Sophy got on together. He admired her, no doubt; no one needed to wonder at that, for her appearance was now remarkably attractive, and as soon as he was up and about he seemed to find the chief business of his days in endeavoring to dissipate the deep-seated, painful shyness which marked Sophy's manner towards him. Nothing could be more unlike her; indifference, not timidity, prevented her from making friends as a rule, but she could not master or conceal the feeling in her necessary intercourse with Mr. French. I say necessary, because at first she kept from him as much as possible, and this conduct and her averted gaze and short replies, when he resolutely engaged her in conversation, would have appeared to mean mere dislike, but for something

strangely soft and even meek that mingled with it all. Instead of being repelled by this shrinking and holding off, it acted on Mr. French like a charm, and, as I said before, he spent himself devotedly, sanguinely, too, on the task of bringing about an easier state of things between them. Mr. French was a trifle effeminate in his person — I mean only as to looks; he had plenty of strength, so far as I could see. His liberality made him popular in the house, and not a soul but praised him up for sweetness of temper; indeed, little things did not vex him; but he was as fond of having his own will in his own way as any one I ever saw, and most ingenious and painstaking always in that pursuit. He had a restless nature, too, which would have put me to the use of all my patience if I had been much in his company; Sophy, it is likely, viewed him with different eyes. I was teaching her to knit; Mr. French would come in the nursery, making a pretext of Lulu, who always had her charming face on for "dear Fabian," as she was pleased to call him, and the child being set on his knee, he used to remain as long as half an hour at a time, and entertain us with his stories. He artfully made as if addressing me rather than my young lady; Sophy kept close to her work on the whole; sometimes, however, she would glance up in a way which showed that she was deeply interested, or be lured to put a question; these were Mr. French's moments of triumph. Then he took to silently anticipating her few wishes, for all the world as if a spirit informed him of them, it looked magical; and thus, what with his determination to please, and the gift I admit he had that way, I could not be surprised to notice Sophy begin to yield a little, slowly and with inexplicable pangs of reluctance, yet it was yielding. I watched in a sober frame of mind; I heard enough and too much said down-stairs about Miss Laghi and Mr. French; Miss Delamayn had gone so far as to remark to me that it would be a grand match for Sophy; Mr. Charlesworth, meanwhile, gave no more observation to the behavior of his nephew and step-daughter than if they had been merry companions under twelve. I watched, and I puzzled over Sophy, and I doubted Mr. French. I thought that perhaps he only occupied himself with her because in our quiet house he was at a total loss for other diversion; a deep attachment, I fancied, would be differently shown. Mr. French was too declared and forward, and, if I can make myself under-

stood, too clever in the manner of his attentions, for me.

One morning, when we were getting to the end of November, I took Lulu out to play ball on the gravelled terrace. The noonday sun shone quite warm out of a pale blue sky, and with the pleasant rays full on her, Sophy, in her cap and black cloak lined with fur, stood leaning against one of the stone pillars at the foot of the wide flight of steps which leads up from the terrace to the glass doors of the drawing-room. She had a history-book in her hand, which she was studying for Miss Delamayn; the governess was to stay at Sweetfields until the Christmas vacation, and after that return no more, Sophy being just eighteen. It was not long, you may be sure, before Mr. French appeared on the scene. He came down from the drawing-room, and taking his stand behind Sophy, affected to be reading out of her book. Sophy blushed a little, turned with a distant yet gentle air, and offered him the volume; he took it, but closed it instantly, and, as I could guess, though of course I did not overhear their talk, fell to urging on her some plan he had in his head. He seemed very earnest, and spoke fast; the winter light struck sharp on his face and Sophy's; Lulu ran past them with her many-colored ball; I see it like a picture.

Celia came round the house and said that Mr. Charlesworth wanted me in the morning-room. I gave permission for her to keep Lulu out another ten minutes and went at once.

Mr. Charlesworth, with a troubled face, was leaning back in his chair by the fire; opposite stood a woman from the Clock Cottage, a little house at the top of Mill Lane, so called because there was a round clock over the door, which old Mr. Charlesworth, at the time when he worked the farm himself, had caused to be put up for the convenience of his laborers; it was out of order now; but all this is of no importance. The woman's name was Davis, and she had little Ada Davis, an orphan niece of her husband's who lived with them, by the hand. I knew the girl well; she was nine or ten years old.

"Here has this child come to make a statement, Ellen," said Mr. Charlesworth, "about some one she saw—a stranger—in the fir walk, on the 27th of September—the day Mr. French was shot. It looks odd, I don't know why she has waited so long, but of course I will hear her story, and the aunt says you can speak well of the child; is that so?"

Ada was a wild little gipsy, always in trouble with Mrs. Davis herself, but I considered her an innocent creature, and now said as much, and I crossed to Mr. Charlesworth's elbow, and suggested that the little girl would speak more at her ease if her aunt were not in the room.

Mr. Charlesworth nodded and rang the bell at his side.

"Take Mrs. Davis into the housekeeper's room," he said when the butler came; "give her a glass of wine. We need not trouble you to wait, Mrs. Davis."

She looked sourly at this, but had no help for it, and curtsied herself out of the room. I would have followed her.

"No, Ellen," said Mr. Charlesworth, "oblige me by remaining. Tell the child to come closer."

I stood near Mr. Charlesworth's chair, and told Ada to come up and speak to the gentleman; as she obeyed, Sophy appeared, followed by Mr. French. She caught her foot at entering, in a loose piece of carpet, slipped, and would have fallen forward if Mr. French had not grasped her by the arm. I should have expected this to put her out a little, but instead she turned, and I saw her face gleam on him for a moment with its lovely Italian smile—Italian, I take leave to call it; she never looked so but she put me in mind of her partly foreign origin.

"What is the play?" asked Mr. French, when they were well inside the room, "do we intrude? why do you both look so solemn on that helpless village girl?"

Mr. Charlesworth briefly explained the matter to his nephew. The young man shrugged his shoulders, "Oh!" he said lightly, "I thought that was forgotten."

I was terrified to see Sophy lose her color and sink, gasping for breath, upon an ottoman in the window. And then she struggled; she put forth all her native power; she got the better of that betraying agony; I trembled to watch her, but in a minute, the worst was over; Sophy sat up, pale, looking down, wretched, but composed and on her guard. Mr. French was standing near her, but he had his eyes fixed on the child; Mr. Charlesworth noticed nothing. I felt as if I should faint or cry out; I did neither.

"Well, Ada Davis," began Mr. Charlesworth in his mild accent, "what have you got to say?"

"I'll never do it again," whispered Ada.

"Don't be frightened. No one here will be angry with you, and if you are careful to speak the truth, you shall have five shillings."



Ada turned very red.

"I went in the fir walk," she said rapidly, "along of myself, to look for cuckoos."

"Cuckoos!" sighed Mr. Charlesworth.

"She means fir-cones, sir," I interposed.

"Oh! well, you went to look for fir-cones, and what did you see?"

Mr. French was leaning near the window, watching the child; evidently she amused him. Sophy sat motionless, and to a careless observer would have appeared simply uninterested.

"I saw a man," said Ada.

"What sort of a man?" Mr. Charlesworth inquired.

"A gentleman."

"Go on. No; wait a minute. You know, Ada Davis, that if you were to invent a tale and bring it here, you would be acting very wickedly?"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. French shook his head, in some impatience, at his uncle's want of discernment.

"She is speaking the truth," he said — "eh, Ellen?"

"I should say so, sir," I replied.

"What did you do when you saw the gentleman, Ada?"

"I was frightened," cried Ada, answering me much more promptly than when she had to address Mr. Charlesworth. "I hid."

Mr. Charlesworth signed to me to continue questioning her.

"And what did he do?" I said.

"He got in the trees, and then I crept away through the field, and climbed out in the road where a bit of the paling's off at the top, and I dropped all of my cuckoos."

"What was the gentleman like?"

The child's eye grew narrow.

"I never saw him before," she said.

"Was he small?"

"As tall as him," said Ada, pointing to Mr. French. "Not so light. Wider along. He had a nice coat and spotty blue tie, and a stick with a blue top."

"I am sure I saw him too," I exclaimed;

"in the town — on the same day."

Sophy raised her head.

"What time were you in the fir walk, little one?" asked Mr. French.

"I don't know, sir."

"Nonsense, my dear. I admire your curls; they are like barley-sugar; but you must learn to think."

Ada looked at him with a saucy smile.

"Yes, sir; I remember now," she said; "Mr. Orford" (that was the curate of St.

Mary's, Upper Maddersley) "went by running down Mill Lane, to meet a funeral, as if he was late, and Fanny Meads was going to see it at the cimmentary, so she wouldn't stop with me, and the funeral was a quarter to three."

"Well done," said Mr. French. "And I," he went on, turning to his uncle, "as I came into the fir walk, heard your stable clock strike seven. We have had enough of this, with your leave; let the witness stand down."

Sophy rose and hurried from the room.

"It seems an odd sort of coincidence, though," said Mr. Charlesworth. "Why did you not mention this sooner?" he enquired of Ada Davis.

"I thought aunt would give it to me for getting in the fir walk."

"Then what made you speak now?"

"I told Fanny Meads in a secret," said Ada, pouting, "and she went and told aunt and uncle, and they said as I was to tell you. Fanny Meads and me aren't friends now."

Mr. Charlesworth began again perplexing himself with useless conjectures; Mr. French was deep in thoughts of another nature, but when his uncle made a direct appeal to him, he replied readily, "Your fir walk is pretty, and if you don't keep the door locked, you must expect cuckoo-hunting maidens and tourists with spotted ties and other strange characters to get in." I heard no more; Mr. Charlesworth giving Ada Davis the promised five shillings, and Mr. French adding five more to them, I took the happy child away.

What could I think? I felt fixed, at my secret heart, the certainty that in spite of times not agreeing and the other evident improbabilities on the surface of the thing, the over-dressed stranger seen by Ada Davis in the fir walk and by myself, that same day, in Maddersley town, had some connection with the accident, if accident indeed it were, sustained by Mr. French on the 27th of September. I also was sure that Sophy knew the truth, that it affected the sisters in some way, and that Sophy, for a reason not to be imagined by me, held herself bound to keep it concealed. Oh! what a strong reason she must esteem it, thought I; what a sacred one! for I had seen this girl, it must be remembered, from an age when she was almost a child, and I say that she had sincerity wrought in with her soul, and marked on her brow. Sophy was sincerity, her faults and her virtues all partook of that one quality, none who knew her would deny it. Poor Sophy! poor,

erring, devoted, tortured, motherless girl! I leave it to others to condemn her.

I learnt that when Mr. French joined Sophy on the terrace, as I have described, he was, after all, only persuading her to ride with him, in the afternoon, and Sophy at the time had given way; but before the luncheon-hour, she sent down word that her head ached, and she would not leave her room, she desired to be perfectly quiet; Celia, who was her messenger, told me she repeated that twice over, and so I dared not disturb her. I spent a weary afternoon, sitting alone in the nursery, at my needle; Lulu was gone, attended by Celia, to drink tea at the vicarage; I sat and saw the bright, short-lived sun decline, and stitched on incessantly, but with none of the usual interest in my work, a frock I had in hand for the child; it was all one to me what I did.

There was a tap at the door, and Mr. French came in, returned from his ride. He said, where was the little one? and without waiting for a reply, inquired after Sophy. I told him that I had not been to my young lady yet, but intended soon to get ready a cup of tea, and take it round to her room. Instead of going away as soon as these speeches had been exchanged between us, Mr. French walked to the window and stood there with his back to me, looking out at the prospect, pleasant even in that leafless season, of rivulet skirting lawn, and beyond, wide pasture-meadows, and further yet, the dark fir walk. He stood so perhaps a minute, and then came, as if in a musing fit, to the chimney-piece at one corner of which I was sitting, and leaned back against it—all this in complete silence, for it was not my place to make a remark, and I worked on as if by myself. However, after a while, I could not help looking up at him, and met his brilliant blue eyes fixed on my face with a disconcertingly direct sharp gaze.

"Well, Ellen," he said immediately, "do you think I have any chance?"

"I don't understand you, sir," I answered in a hurry, but my conscience reproached me, and I added, "or if I do, I am sure it does not become my position that I should."

Mr. French laughed shortly, though he was in no laughing mood, and went on, still looking hard in my face. "That is admirable," he said; "but suppose we forget your position for once and remember only that you know more of your young lady than any one else in this house; more than my excellent uncle, more than

the monumental-browed governess, more, though I have studied deeply, Ellen, than I myself. I repeat, and I don't want to hear about your position, have I any chance?"

I thought his speaking to me, in this open way, so extraordinary, and yet he did it as if it were the most matter-of-course thing in the world; I was so fluttered to find that he had, as I could not but believe now, set his heart seriously on winning Sophy; I felt at the same time so blindly, heavily conscious of something wrong which complicated matters, and of which Mr. French knew nothing at all; I say, with this rush of mingled sensations, my brain was in such a maze, that speech was impossible at first, till, Mr. French waiting and his searching, expectant eye on me, I got a little rid of my agitation and replied, "I have nothing to say on the subject, sir, but this—God bless Miss Sophy and send her happy."

"Amen! by all means," said Mr. French; "but religious, scrupulous, flawless model of discretion though you be, Ellen" (those were his exact words), "I fail to see why you object—" He broke off; he heard her step before I did; the door was slowly opened and Sophy came in. Trifling things certainly strike us at strange moments; as she appeared, I do not know why, the reflection crossed my mind that Mr. French had never seen Sophy except in black; it did not misbecome her, but white was the wear I preferred for her in summer, and in winter rich shades of red.

Sophy's features were still and set, and her eyes half-closed; her dark hair, which grew so thickly it was not easy to manage, drooped forward in disorder, partly over her brow; I saw she had forgotten to smooth it before leaving her room. She had a withdrawn, hopeless, calm, deliberate look; Mr. French surveyed her and, for the first time that I ever saw him at such a loss, changed countenance and said nothing. I mended the fire; Sophy chafed her hands at the blaze, though they were burning hot already, as I could see; and then she raised herself from her stooping posture and looked at Mr. French.

"I have something to tell you," she said, in a low but clear voice.

"Oh! what you please, Sophy," he murmured; the high-spirited, assured young man was in a tremor, his brow bent; from under it, he darted strange, wavering glances at the girl, as if he could not wait for her to speak, and yet wished to avoid hearing. It was Sophy's manner affected

him in this way; she spoke and acted like a person returned from another world.

"Will you like to go in the drawing-room, Miss Sophy?" I asked, thinking perhaps she had forgotten I was there.

"No, Ellen," she said, "I want you."

And her eyes unconsciously sought my face as if she took comfort and a sense of protection from my being near; she did not move a finger, only gave me that glance; but I have never forgotten it. She took her place on my low nursing-chair, and Mr. French remained standing by the chimney-piece; I moved with my work, a little behind Sophy; she began, leaning her head on her hand and looking into the fire. "It is something," she said, "which does not only concern me, or it would be no secret. It is a secret—the whole of it. Will you please remember?" Mr. French answered this by a look which satisfied Sophy. "Ellen," she continued, without turning her head, "you know that evening when Mr. Grandire was here and Laury and I came home in trouble, from walking in Mill Lane?"

"Yes, Miss Sophy," I replied.

"I must go back a little," she said, "or you'll not understand. We were unhappy sometimes at the farm where we lived with Uncle Basil before coming to Sweetfields; especially Laury did not like it. There was a man we used to know when we were little; he was a younger brother of mamma's second husband; his name was Alfred Blay. We had not seen him since, but he got a place in an office at Farnyfoot—that was the town nearest to us—and he made friends with us again, out walking; he could not come to the farm, because Uncle Basil said all the Blays were as bad as they knew how to be. Laury was sixteen and I was fourteen. He and Laury used to write to one another, and Laury fancied she liked him, and at last he persuaded her to go away with him. Uncle had been very unkind to Laury that day, and Alfred Blay said they could be married in France, and he promised to return in a week and fetch me over; Laury would not leave me without that. She was not to have told me, but she did, the night before; we were awake all night, and I begged and cried so much by morning she had given it up. We know now that Alfred Blay was all falsehood, so we cannot tell what he really intended to do. Laury sent a boy with a note to the place where he was waiting with a tax-cart on the Farnyfoot road; he came up to the farm in the evening, because he thought Uncle Basil would be

out, but uncle was at home, and he saw Alfred Blay and set the dogs on him. After that, we were ordered not to walk outside the gates, unless the housekeeper could go with us. We heard soon that Alfred Blay was dismissed from the office at Farnyfoot for some bad conduct; Laury hated to hear his name, and when we came away, she seemed to forget him altogether. We saw him no more, till that evening in Mill Lane."

The melancholy even voice came to a pause; Sophy changed her attitude; she leaned back and pushed the heavy locks from her forehead. Mr. French's face was extremely flushed, but he looked relieved, and when Sophy was silent, he said gently:—

"And this scoundrel wanted money?"

"Yes," said Sophy; "he had Laury's letters, and he said he thought of sending them to Mr. Grandire, as he felt sure he would get a good price for them. I wanted so much to tell Henry, for Laury had done nothing wrong, and she was only sixteen; but there was a misfortune. Henry has very strict ideas, and when Laury was first engaged to him, he told her that he had always said he would take his wife out of a convent; but he used to hear her describe our wild lonely life at the farm, and afterwards how quiet we were at Sweetfields, and he thought she must have been kept as well from the world as in any convent, and he asked her if she had ever—ever——" Sophy faltered.

"Ever played a part in any sort of love-affair?" said Mr. French, without the slightest hesitation, and more and more recovering his usual self; "and she said, no, of course. Oh, Grandire!"

"So, when I looked at Alfred Blay," Sophy went wearily on, "and thought of some of the words in Laury's letters and called Henry to mind, I could not help agreeing with her, that if he were told now, and saw the letters, he would not go on with the marriage, and though, if I had been in her place, I would rather—but that's nothing; was Laury's heart to break? Alfred Blay said that if he had his expenses paid, and something to start with, he would go to Australia; we gave him all the money we had, but it was not nearly enough; then we wrote to a person we knew in Farnyfoot, and asked her to lend us a certain sum in confidence and we would pay it back with interest by degrees. She sent the money, and I took it myself, one Sunday evening, to Alfred Blay in the garden of the mill-farm; I did

best without poor Laury. He said he had a good offer to go out with a friend and learn sheep-farming, and they would sail in three days, and he burnt the letters in my presence; but he did not really burn them. He showed me a packet made up exactly like the other, but with only one of Laury's letters at the top and another at the bottom, and he kept the rest. I never thought of that. Then on the twenty-seventh, in the morning, I got a letter admitting that he had done so, as the temptation was too great, and he asked me to meet him at a quarter to three in the Mill Walk. I did not tell Laury. He was much better dressed and behaved differently; he said he could not make up his mind to go to Australia, and he had a stroke of luck with his money in London. I asked him why, if he did not want more money, he came again to torment us, and I must make haste back, I told him, or I should be missed, and he said very well; but would I meet him at seven that evening in the same place; and then," said Sophy, still with the far-off look and voice, in half apathy, "he began to make love to me."

Mr. French started forward with a violent execration; a flame sprang for one instant into Sophy's pale face and faded again, and she said, "Hush! he did not come—he did not come again; that evening he was dead."

"Dead—how dead?" cried Mr. French, standing close in front of her. "I don't care how—but how?"

"He was killed crossing the railway-line at Seventrees Slope," said Sophy, "he took the short cut from Maddersley here, and he was killed at Seventrees Slope. I don't know about the letters, but they were signed with a pet name, not like Laury's own—a stranger would learn nothing from them, and I suppose they have been destroyed."

There was a short silence after this; we were now between twilight and firelight. Mr. French bent down and whispered to Sophy, on which she suddenly rose from her chair and half-crossed the room. There she turned and looked back towards him, yet her face and form were as if drawn away.

"Cast every thought you have had of me out of your heart," she said in a strong piercing voice. "It was I fired the shot that struck you in Fir Walk; I took you for the man I went to meet, it was evening and you stood in the same place, you leant against the very tree. I meant to kill him, and if you had not moved as I"—

she broke off—"oh, I did not plan it," she wailed, wringing her hands. "I had no thoughts. I could not think, my blood sang in my head, I dragged myself to meet him, and my bad angel put the pistol in my way—I was used to firearms, uncle taught me as a child."

Mr. French stood motionless and perfectly pale, I could not see his features clearly.

"I am guilty—a guilty creature," said Sophy, her head sinking forward, "and I cannot declare it, I must live out a lie. And you don't feel your wound now?" she went on, addressing herself with melancholy tenderness to Fabian French; "and lately, I don't know how, neither have I so much felt it, but this morning the words of a harmless child struck me down in your presence, and you did not see, you did not suspect—when would you suspect? I shall feel better directly," she said hurriedly—"better now you know; and Laury's secret—Laury's secret—"

A wandering, frightened look came in her face, she breathed very hard and quick, and laid both hands against her side. I ran, seeing she would fall, but Fabian French was before me, he caught her in his arms.

"Sophy, Sophy!" he said. He repeated her name again and again with words of love, and soothed her; but another moment and it needed not, Sophy's life on earth was done.

From Blackwood's Magazine.

A VISIT TO THE KARUN RIVER AND KUM.  
BY COLONEL MARK SEVER BELL, V.C., A.D.C.,  
ROYAL ENGINEERS.

As the permission lately granted by the Persian government to foreigners for the free navigation of the lower portion of the Kárun River has attracted a certain amount of public attention to the accelerated communication thereby effected between Tíhrán, Isfahán and Khúrásán (*Turshis*), with the Persian Gulf, it has been suggested to me that a brief account of my peregrinations in this region would be acceptable to the readers of *Blackwood's Magazine*.

I had seen much of Himalayan scenery, and longed to wander amidst the snowy peaks and deeply cut clefts of the Zagros range. I also desired to visit the trade centres of the plateau of mid-Persia,\*

\* "From Arachosia, from Candaor east, And Margiana, to the Hyrcanian cliffs

which lies to its north. I hoped to find novelty and excitement by associating with the as yet half tamed and often lawless tribes of Feili and Bakhtiari Lurs, inhabiting its valleys and plains, as well as with the more decorous Arabs and courteous Persians, the former of whom are to be found along the Kárún to Dizfúl and in the vast plains, whilst the latter dwell beyond the Zagros mountain chain, in the classic soil of Persia, known better to travellers of modern days as the scenes of the romantic adventures of Sir Henry Layard, Sir Henry Rawlinson, and Mr. Stocqueler and others. Then, also, the very sound of such names as Susa, Shushan, Ram Hormuz, with their Scriptural associations, suggested dreams of Daniel and the Apocrypha, mingled with dim reminiscences of Greek heroes encountering the Mede and Parthian cavalry.

With these and suchlike thoughts uppermost in my mind, I left Karachi early in March, 1884, accompanied by Shahsowar Khan, a Farsiwan, as companion, and a Madras cook, in the s.s. Arabia, one of the British India Company's steamers, for Basra, the well-known port of Mesopotamia, on the banks of the Shatt-al-Arab, in Turkish territory.

Thence, after completing my final preparations for the land journey, I proceeded, in company with Mr. Robertson, the acting consul, to Muhammerah, in a steam yacht belonging to the firm of Gray, Mackenzie, & Co., reaching that place on the 23rd March.

By the kind offices of the above-named firm I was furnished with *baráts*, or money orders, on merchants at the towns I proposed visiting; and as both this firm and that of Messrs. Gray, Paul, & Co. were well known and esteemed by the Bakhtiari and other tribes in southwest Persia, they were enabled to give me letters to the Lur chiefs in the interior, which proved of the utmost service. Indeed, without them I should perhaps never have reached Khoramábád alive, and they smoothed my return journey from Istahán to Bebehán by Ardal and Sadat. In fact, the influence of these firms alone insured the successful issue of my journey.

Muhammerah is the port of the Kárún, a river the name of which, at least, should be known to every schoolboy in these

school-board days, for it is easily to be remembered as the only navigable stream in Persia.

This town is situated on a navigable canal, the Hafar, which connects the main waters of the Kárún with the channel in which the streams of the Tigris and Euphrates are joined, and known here as the Shatt-al-Arab. The Bahmehshir, the real mouth of the Kárún, carries off now but one-fourth of the effluent waters, with about two fathoms over its worst shallows at low tide; whilst the Hafar admits of sea-going ships of deep draught anchoring in from twenty to thirty feet at all times, and has a breadth of from three hundred to four hundred yards, with steep clay banks near the town, forming a most commodious estuary.\*

The situation of Muhammerah is, without doubt, far more salubrious than that of Basra, for the stream of the Kárún is cool and invigorating, and decidedly affects the temperature of the vicinity. In addition to being the natural outlet and emporium of all central-Persian trade with the outer world, Muhammerah, from its position, commands the approach to the Turkish trade-marts of Barsa and Baghdád.

It will be remembered that fifty years ago the Porte laid claim to this town previous to the Turco-Persian Frontier Commission, which was decided in favor of Persia by the treaty of Erzrum in 1847, since which date the Persians have done nothing to indicate their appreciation of its capabilities. Under any other rule but that of an Oriental potentate, such a site would speedily be occupied by a flourishing city, with crowded quays, docks, and bonding warehouses; whilst jetties, piers, and wharves would supersede the low mud-banks, and railway termini and factories replace the barren mud-flats now so sparsely populated. Hitherto Persia has derived absolutely no benefit from her possession of such an advantageous position, and the trade which formerly was carried along the Kárún has been allowed to disappear utterly, a decline which is probably coeval with the decadence of Shustar and Dizfúl as trade centres.

The mud walls of the town measure about a mile in length each way, surrounded by a narrow and shallow moat with flanking defences at the angles and at intervals along the perimeter.

The population, when I visited the place, did not exceed some three hundred

Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales;  
From Atropatia, and the neighboring plains  
Of Adiabene, Media, and the south  
Of Susiana, to Balsara's haven."

*Paradise Regained.*

\* The tide rises here from eight to ten feet.



to four hundred families — say two thousand souls — who occupied but a small portion of the walled enclosure. The streets are narrow and filthy, with deep gutters running down their thoroughfares into which the sewage from the flat roofs of the squalid buildings on either side finds its way, after trickling down their walling of sunburnt bricks or mud. This primitive drainage system, which prevails to Dizfúl, seems to cause no discomfort to those whose olfactory nerves have from youth been accustomed to it; and for a sitting or sleeping apartment to open out upon one or several such vertical drains is nothing uncommon.

I had heard that a short time previous to my arrival some French commercial and military travellers\* had been displaying considerable activity in the vicinity of the Kárún, and that it was useless to apply to the authorities for a safe-conduct, as the chief would be unable to guarantee a passage through the territory over which he exercises a patriarchal authority. The chief of Muhammerah and of the Arab tribes in the vicinity, the *ka'b*, is Shaikh Mizal Khan, who lives a mile from the town, on the left bank of the Shatt-al-Arab. This chieftain is well disposed towards the British, and on intimate terms of friendship with Mr. Robertson, who introduced me to him.

I found the shaikh to be a middle-aged man, of fine figure but sad countenance, betokening probably domestic unhappiness (for he has many wives but no children) and insecurity of his position. It is the object of every man in Oriental countries like Persia, under despotic rule, to attract as little observation as possible to his wealth and power. On this account, Shaikh Mizal may naturally view with disquietude any development of the Kárún traffic; as any marked increase of his personal wealth, or that of the country and tribes under him, would produce envy at headquarters and provoke suspicion, which would be speedily followed by dispossession and ruin, unless under the protection of a powerful patron at court. Being the younger son of the late Hajji Jabir Khan, his elder brother, a pensioner at the city of Isfahán, is able to influence the high Persian officials in their relations

with the shaikh, whose partiality for the English subjects him to their jealousy and close observation. I was myself very favorably impressed by Shaikh Mizal's dignified appearance and cordiality, and I noticed particularly that he conducted his *darbar* (levee and reception) with dignity, great decorum, and ceremony.

By aid of the shaikh I was enabled to procure mules, and, what was of great importance, the services of a mounted guide, as far up the banks of the Kárún as lay within the limits of the chief's jurisdiction — that is, for ninety odd miles; and I was also accommodated at Muhammerah in good quarters as his guest for the night.

Our small party of self and Shahsowar (mounted on Gulf Arabs, which I here purchased), and my old Madras cook (seated on a pack-mule), left Muhammerah on the 24th March, along a road but slightly raised above the surrounding mud-flats, which about here then formed a vast swamp, due to the heavy spring rains; and after making a short march of seven miles, halted for the night at Gisbah,\* a small village of mud and straw huts on a muddy creek difficult to ford. I arrived here wet and covered with mud; for, as the sun was sinking below the horizon, my mare, getting into difficulties and finding herself gradually sinking in the mud, quietly lay down, much to my discomfiture.

Beyond the village the route followed a mere track along the left bank of the Kárún River, winding to avoid marshy spots. Near Muhammerah a belt of vegetation fringes the river-side, and a date-plantation was here and there visible; but as we proceeded, we passed beyond the region of date cultivation, and the country became altogether treeless. There were some patches of scanty grass, affording grazing for sheep, and after covering thirty miles of an uninteresting flat, we halted near an encampment of Arabs belonging to the Muntafegghah tribe, who were in no way inclined to be hospitable; so that, as I travelled lightly without a tent, trusting to be housed nightly, we here bivouacked in a heavy dew which saturated our blankets.

To gain for me the consideration of the tribes, our Arab guide gave out that I was in charge of property belonging to the Zil-ul-Sultan, the ruler of Arabistan; this ensured me as well the power of purchas-

\* It subsequently transpired that these formed a party of *savants*, headed by M. Dieulafoy, despatched under the auspices of the Ministry of Arts, whose object was to make excavations for the purpose of archaeological research, on the site of the famous *Apadâna* (Hall of the Royal Throne) of Artaxerxes Mnemon, at Susa. This mission was protected by the shaikh of the Arabs, by name Mahamad Tahir.

\* The Dorak canal, which tails into the Jarrahi River, is taken off from the left bank, a couple of miles higher up-stream than Gisbah, and is navigable for *ballams* (small row-boats).

ing supplies at high rates. The fertile imagination of Shahsowar raised me to the rank of *sartip* (general) and wealthy noble. In vain I protested against such deceit; Shahsowar but answered that such reports were necessary, and that to spread them was his business, and not mine to contradict them.

The next day's journey led us twenty-four miles, in the same northerly direction along the river's banks, mostly over a plain covered with a sweet-smelling grass (the *guli-sard* or yellow-flowered grass), and we now came across many Arab encampments, belonging to which were numerous flocks of sheep, cows, horses, and donkeys; whilst plenty of fine wheat and barley, now being cut green for fodder, was growing by the sides of the river, which is here about three hundred yards wide.

The Arabs (the *Ilyats* or nomad tribes, of Shaikh Mizal and the Mula of Hawizah) about here, notwithstanding the low temperature experienced on these arid plains during the spring nights and mornings,\* are miserably clad in thin brown blankets with slits for arm-holes, which, with the black blanket tents, are woven by the men and women of the tribe; and on their heads is the colored handkerchief or *kefiyeh*, kept in place by a double band of camel's hair. Their chief occupations consist in weaving and spinning the wool from their flocks, tending and rearing their herds, making butter and cheese, and growing wheat and barley sufficient for their wants and no more; the acreage under cultivation, therefore, is nothing to what it might be.

At the beginning of winter, having scratched the surface of the soil with a wooden implement, they sow their grain, returning during the cold weather to the date-groves of the Shatt-al-Arab until the spring, when they revisit the banks of the Kárún to reap their harvests, which are altogether dependent on the rainfall. The occupation of spinning yarn out of wool on bobbins takes the place of the knitting of the industrious housewife of Europe, and fills up every spare moment.

The wealth of these nomads consist in their flocks, the sheep being most esteemed on account of the value of their wool and milk. Throughout south-west Persia sheep's milk is preferred to cow's milk, as being richer in quality; but I must say that the effect of hearing that I had been drinking it for a couple of

days, compelled me to swallow a dram of whiskey, "just as a wad." Sab'a, consisting of a few miserable huts and a clump of palm-trees, on the right bank of the river, here from one hundred and fifty to two hundred yards wide, was passed at forty-two miles from Muhammerah. About here the tamarisk furnishes fuel in comparative abundance.

On the 27th March, about seventy miles from Muhammerah we arrived at the ferry of Ummut Temr, on the Kárún, here two hundred and fifty feet wide and eighteen deep, with a strong current. We crossed over in a flat-bottomed boat called a *ballam*, but the horses and mules had to swim across. A driver passes over to the farther bank, and thence by a peculiar cry attracts the mules, which follow the "bell-mule" on her being driven into the water. Our horses gave trouble, and had to be steered across alongside the ballam by ropes attached to their heads.

The alluvium of the lower plains now shortly gave place to tertiary gravels and sandstones, whilst the elevation increased, so that in the afternoon we attained a height of two hundred and twenty feet, on reaching the town of Ahwáz, having travelled eighty-two miles in all from our starting-point at Muhammerah. The capabilities of the soil for forty miles below Ahwáz, and about as many inland from either bank, are great. Luxuriant crops of cereals could be here grown, as well as sugarcane, cotton, etc.

Ahwáz, the ancient Aginis, was formerly the chief town of Khuzistan, and at the summit of its power under the earlier khalifs of the house of Abbas; but it was destroyed towards the end of the fourteenth century by Timur, since which date it has never recovered its former importance, although its situation at the barrier of the Kárún marks it as a valuable position for commercial purposes. Pitched outside of Ahwáz I found the camp of Ibrahim Mirza, Itisham-ul-Sultanah, the deputy of the Zil-ul-Sultan (the eldest son of the shah, but not by a royal mother), who rules at Isfahán. It may be here remarked that I travelled as an Indian officer on leave of absence, accompanied by Shahsowar, a Farsiwan bent on a pilgrimage to the great Shiya shrine at Karbalah, after visiting with me Tihrán, Isfahán, and Shiráz. The prince was ill, but sent his wizar, and the colonels of his cavalry and infantry escort, to make the customary inquiries regarding my health.

I was treated with every courtesy, and given a safe-conduct to Dizfúl, ninety miles

\* The thermometer read 55° Fahrenheit at sunrise.

farther north; but I was warned against proceeding beyond that town, as the tribes occupying the passes in the hills beyond it were in rebellion.

We visited the Persian camp and found the men well accommodated in bell-tents, those belonging to the senior officers being large, well-pitched, boarded, and carpeted. In the intercourse between the officers and men, Persian etiquette rather than discipline was observed; the men saluted and remained standing, whilst those of higher rank sat at a respectful distance after the customary salutations, speaking deferentially and in a low key.

The colonel of cavalry was Hajji Ibrahim Khan, a nephew of the powerful chief of the Bakhtiari, to whom I looked for protection beyond Dizfúl; I therefore gained this officer's good-will, and through him that of his uncle, by presenting him with a revolver. Travellers everywhere amongst nomads, and generally throughout Persia, must carry with them a stock of presents, such as broadcloth (blue, red, and drab), revolvers, guns, rifles, ammunition, knives, scissors, etc. I have, indeed, been asked for false teeth!

The following morning I examined the obstructions which here block the free navigation of the river, and the neighborhood, with a view of determining the best means of turning these obstacles by canal or tramway. My movements were always watched, and the wízir was anxious to find out whether I was inquisitive about the Kárún or not; and as at the time I was trying the paces of a horse presented for purchase, whilst riding over the ground I affected to be far more interested in my mount than in the course of the river and its capabilities for navigation. Hajji Ibrahim in the afternoon took me out shooting with a troop of his well-mounted Bakhtiari horse. We advanced in line at open order, each firing at the partridges (*frankolin*) that rose before him. The troopers killed their birds freely, firing from horseback, and at times, following up a bird, made good shooting at full gallop.

Five ridges of sandstone here form a series of weirs across the stream, causing a difference of level of about ten feet in something under a mile of the river's course, and accounting for the navigable condition of the upper reaches of the Kárún beyond Ahwáz. The Ahwáz *band* is founded on the second ridge from the north.

Major Wells, R. E., made a careful survey of these rapids and the river channel in 1881, when he proposed a line for the

construction of a canal,\* which, I think, would not be either a difficult or costly project. Water-channels have formerly been cut in the rock, probably for mills as well as for irrigation purposes, in days long gone by, perhaps by the Sassanians, before the town of Aginis ceded its position as capital of Khuzistan to Shustar, and eventually to Dizfúl. In March, when I visited the place, boats drawing twelve feet of water could reach Ahwáz from Muhammerah, but in the dry season only boats of three to four feet draught can pass Ismailiyah. For instance, the steamer Kárún, in the possession of Shaikh Mizal, is of one hundred and twenty tons, and draws about three feet. It has done the journey from Muhammerah to Ahwáz, travelling all night, in twenty-three hours, in charge of her Arab captain — a distance of one hundred and seven miles.

Without doubt a canal, about one hundred feet wide, did at one time exist to the eastward of Ahwáz, connecting possibly the river below the rapids with the upper waters above the island. It is not at all improbable that it may prove less expensive to reopen this old channel than to excavate a new one. The length of this canal would be about two and a quarter miles; at any rate it marks the line of an ancient irrigation channel, which can be reopened without interfering with a navigation canal, as it takes off higher up the river. For the present, at least, all goods must be transhipped at Ahwáz into smaller boats for carriage farther inland, or be there loaded on pack-animals. If a tramway be laid down to turn the rapids, as a temporary measure, it need be a very light one. A permanent tramway would, I think, be a mistake. It might be considered best to make Ahwáz, and not Shustar, the terminus of a railway from Tíhrán *via* Kúm, Sultánábád, Búrújird, and Khoramábád, if there be any chance of this very important public work being carried out at an early date.

From Ahwáz a pack-route leads to Shiráz, two hundred and seventy-five miles distant, done in thirteen stages by mules. Along this route, at about sixty miles from Ahwáz, naphtha is found; but whether there is a sufficient supply to meet the requirements of steamers navigating the Kárún, it is impossible to say with our present knowledge.

Leaving Ahwáz on the twenty-ninth, after skirting the river and passing the

\* Its length is under twenty-five hundred yards, with a depth of from twenty-five to thirty feet, through sand, clay, and sandstone.

low range of hills of reddish sandstone which extends in line with the barrier across it, we left the river half a mile to the west, and, at six miles, passed indications of somewhat extensive ruins — mounds and fragments of hewn masonry of the time of Shapur. We touched the river again at the village and ferry of Wais, beyond which the authority of the shaiikh of Muhammerah does not extend. Passing again more ruins, some small villages off the road, with patches of cultivation, and the encampment of a troop of cavalry, after riding twenty-three miles from Ahwáz we reached Band-i-Kir, where the river, which we now crossed, is about one hundred yards broad. There seems to be plenty of good cultivation hereabouts; and thousands of sheep, driven in from the neighboring district, camp nightly about the village, which consists of about forty Arab families, and lies at the junction of the three streams which here unite to form the Kárún River. In December (the low season) the river carries at least five feet of water between Ahwáz and Band-i-Kir, and now, in March, nothing under twelve feet with a moderate current. Of the three rivers here uniting, the most navigable is the Rud-i-Boleiti or Ab-i-Gargar, a canal on which lighters of six feet draught can, it was said, at all times reach the *band* a few miles below Shustar. No traffic was seen, however, on the river, nor did we meet any pack-animals or even travellers *en route*. The plain between this and Ahwáz is capable of growing heavy crops of cereals.

We next traversed, on the thirtieth, the gently rising, undulating, and fertile but uncultivated table-land lying between the two arms of the Kárún River above mentioned. This neglected district affords grazing to the flocks of a few wandering Arabs, and is but sparsely cultivated; it is treeless and produces no firewood. At eleven miles we passed through Daulatabad, a small Arab village of a few wretched huts of mud and straw, near an old mud fort on the marly right bank of the river, here two hundred feet wide, flowing in a valley thirty feet deep. Round about, the luxuriant patches of wheat, clover, onions, poppy, and giant thistles, served to indicate the natural fecundity of the soil. The only signs of traffic noticeable were a few landing-stages on the river-bank, where the boats generally discharge their goods for Shustar. The boats lying here were each of from twenty-five to thirty tons burden. Donkeys, carrying loads of two hundred pounds each, carry the bulk of

the goods thence to the town. Boats were said not to be able to pass up-stream beyond a ridge which forms a natural barrier across the river seven miles below Shustar, and sixty-four miles by water above Ahwáz, before crossing which, in cuttings at times twelve feet deep, we passed several small villages. As we approached the town of Shustar, we observed round towers scattered over the fields as points of observation, used by the inhabitants for defence against raids in troublous times.

We then crossed the *pul*, or bridge, of Shah-Ali, consisting of four arches which span a canal outside the town. It is solidly constructed of stone cemented with lime, fifty feet long, and some twelve feet broad. We next came across a still larger bridge, the Pul-i-Lashkar, with eight arches, over the Ab-i-Khurd; from thence a broad road, passing the Imamzada, or Shrine, of Abdulla, led to the Gargar gate of the town. The city of Shustar, after the decadence of Ahwáz, was the capital town of Khuzistan, the province which corresponds nearly with the ancient Susiana, but now is second in importance to Dizfúl. The number of its inhabitants, from forty-five thousand, has dwindled within the last century to six thousand; its trade has lapsed into insignificance, and its once crowded bazaar is now almost untenanted. This decay has been attributed by the inhabitants themselves to official exactions and a total want of all government, causing general insecurity.

Hitherto we had met with an Arab population, and the Arab dress is worn by the chiefs at Shustar; the lower orders generally wear blue cotton trousers, and tunics girt round the waist, with the Persian felt hat, or an ample *puggerie*. The coast Arabs are strong and active, with commercial tastes, and not bigoted.

We were here lodged in the house of Mirza Jhan, and were his guests. His residence is a fine structure, three-storied, built of stone and wood, with balconies overhanging the Ab-i-Gargar, which washes the foot of the cliff one hundred feet below it. It is well supplied with *sardabs*, or subterranean vaults (excavated in clay with embedded masses of soft limestone), into which it is usual for the people to retire during the intense heat of the summer days. These cool vaults are provided with light and air by a huge circular shaft.

The town of Shustar, entered by three gates on either side, occupies a slightly elevated site, about a mile square, partially surrounded by walls, which are, however,

in ruins. On the east it is washed by the canal leading from the Kárún, called the Ab-i-Gargar, and to the north is the Ab-i-Shateit, or the main stream of the Kárún, from which another canal, the Ab-i-Khurd, flows round the west and south of the town, which is thus perfectly encompassed by the canals of the Kárún, which join to the south of it.

The streets of the town are narrow, worn into deep ruts, and most difficult to traverse, being quite impracticable for wheeled traffic, and, as usual, are also the city drains. The walls of the houses are somewhat high, and are solidly constructed of stone set in lime or mud. Numerous arcades exist in the town, many of which are in ruins, and (says M. d'Estrey) the remains of a fine ancient aqueduct. Carpets and felts are manufactured here; the former being made of cotton, and of no great beauty. There is a rectangular fort with an interior citadel on the high ground close to the river at the north end of the town; a subterranean canal supplies both it and the city with water. A conspicuous feature of the place is Valerian's \* bridge, of over thirty arches, of brick and stone, and six hundred yards long, which is built on the Band-i-Mizan, crossing the Ab-i-Shateit and the inlet of the Ab-i-Khurd.† Other *bands* cross the several canals in the vicinity, over which water was flowing when visited by me. These massive hydraulic structures point to the civilization attained here in the days of the Sassanian Shapur, and to the importance of Shustar and its vicinity.

From the Kárún, below Shustar, to the Bahmeh-Shir, its mouth, numerous canals and watercourses in olden days irrigated the fertile plains along its banks, which are capable of growing luxurious crops of corn, barley, sugarcane, cotton, etc., and their beds are now filled up. Many opinions have been given upon the practicability of opening up the navigation of the Kárún River, some favorable, others unfavorable. From my experience of this stream in March, I have had little hesitation in pronouncing the passage feasible

at all seasons for flat-bottomed boats of a burden up to fifty tons, provided with expansive sails, similar to those navigating the Indus at Sukkur; and for flat-bottomed steamers drawing\* from three to four feet, like those which now ply on the Tigris to Baghdad of four hundred tons burden and one hundred horse-power, belonging to the Tigris Steam Navigation Company. Before constructing steamers for service on shallow rivers, the relative advantages and disadvantages of stern-wheelers and paddle-wheelers might be thoroughly tested, as the former would appear to be well adapted for the service.

The environs of Shustar are well wooded, and the poppy (*Papaver macrostemon*), which here grows to perfection, is largely cultivated. The town occupies a site of great commercial importance, and, together with Dizfúl, is the outlet for the produce of the hills to the north and east, and of the plains to the west. Situated on the Kárún, the land route to Tihrán is lessened by one hundred and thirty-seven miles, and this city is brought within four hundred and eighty-five miles, and Isfahán within two hundred and seventy-five miles of a port. It must attract to itself the trade of the fertile districts of Hamadán, Karmánshah, and Búrújird. In the days of the Atabegs, in the thirteenth century, a good paved road — the Jadah-i-Atabeg — extended through the Bakhtiari hills to Isfahán and Shiráz. This will be one of the first routes to be again resuscitated by the opening of the navigation of the Kárún. I found Shustar altogether cut off from the north by the Feili Lurs, who refused to allow caravans to pass through their hills. The question that now perplexed me was how to accomplish what caravans could not. I had foreseen these difficulties, and at Ahwáz, by gaining the friendship of Hajji Ibrahim Khan, Bakhtiari, had paved the way to overcome them. I was told that it was unsafe to visit the reputed tomb of Daniel, which lies within easy distance, or to navigate by raft (downstream) the rivers Dizfúl or Shateit; for although the Arabs here are well disposed, they are great robbers.

On the 1st April I left Shustar by the bridge of Valerian, whence a broad and good road led up a slight incline to a break in the hills of Fedelak, through which a steep, narrow mule-path, leading here and there, down steps in the rock,

\* In the middle of the third century, Shapur, the monarch of the Persians, had become a formidable rival to the waning power of Rome. It will be remembered that the emperor Valerian, when following Shapur to Edessa, was captured by the Persians, and, in A.D. 260, detained in captivity, and subjected to cruel indignities which caused his death. It is related that this Roman emperor's skin was stuffed and preserved as a trophy in one of the Persian temples. The bridge was, it is said, designed and built by one of the Roman prisoners from Edessa, with funds furnished by Valerian's treasure.

† There was a difference of level of eight or ten feet between the waters above and below the *band*.

\* The s.s. *Blosse-Lynch* is the most powerful boat on the Tigris River at present. She has 100 horse-power; length, 225 feet; breadth, 29 feet; tonnage, 383 tons; draught, 3 feet 6 inches to 4 feet.



conducted us into the rich plain of Akili, which extended forty miles by ten or fifteen broad, undulating gently and covered with grass, which now grew thick after the February rains. The pasture becomes burnt up in June, when the heat is described as excessive. Beyond the river on our right could be seen successive parallel ridges of hills, the most distant of which were entirely snow-clad, the crests of the intermediate range partially capped with snow, while the nearer chain appeared steep and barren like those skirting the left bank of the Kárún.

About six miles out we entered the Bakhtiari country, and after a ride of eighteen miles from Shustar reached Ab-i-Bid, a very small village with a high-walled enclosure, the fort and winter headquarters of the ilkhani of the Bakhtiaris, close alongside a stream of clear cold water. The average day temperature was here 82° under canvas; nights cool, with a heavy dew.

Imam Kuli Khan, the ilkhani, received me with some little distinction, sending his son and a troop of horse several miles out to meet me. During the feats of horsemanship performed for my edification, one horse and its rider turned a complete somersault, neither of them being hurt fortunately. It was wonderful, considering the roughness of the country, that more did not come to grief. The *fantasia* performed by these alleged descendants of Chengiz Khan's hordes on such occasions is well worth witnessing.

I found this powerful chief of the tribes which occupy the plains of Akili and the hills eastward as far as Ardal, a middle-aged man of genial deportment, —

Of mild demeanor though of savage mood.

His *darbar* was conducted with somewhat less gravity than that of the Shaikh Mizal. In fact, the joyous nature and manly freedom of the Bakhtiaris contrast strongly with the sedate bearing of the Arabs to the south and west. Kuli Khan, the ilkhani, pressed me to change my proposed route and to pass through his territory to Isfahán and thence to Kúm, stating that it was impossible for me to go there through Dizfúl and Khoramábád, as the Lur tribes were in rebellion and would not allow even the shah himself to pass.

However, several pressing considerations induced me to persevere in attempting the shortest line to Kúm; and finding I was resolved to proceed, Imam Kuli, after consultation with Asad Khan, governor of the Dizfúl district, who was his

son-in-law, and had just arrived from Dizfúl, gave me a guide and a letter to Hajji Ali Khan, chief of the Sagwand tribe, then encamped at Kala Rezza, who was about migrating with his wild Lurs to Khoramábád, along the very road which I was desirous of following.

Accordingly it was resolved that from Dizfúl I should make a forced march to join Hajji Ali Khan, and trust to his friendship for the ilkhani, to whom he is related by marriage, for protection as far as Khoramábád, against the Bairanwand and Dirikawand Iliyats, who, since the days of Sir H. Rawlinson (1836) and Sir A. Layard (1846), had enjoyed a reputation for subsisting on plunder in their mountain fastnesses. In consequence of this unsafe state of the road, I was informed that two years before (1882) two of the chiefs of the Bairanwand tribe and five of the Sagwand tribe had been invited to Khoramábád, ostensibly to receive favors, but in reality to be murdered by the Persian officials; and this treachery had not improved the confidence of the nomads.

Taking leave, therefore, of the hospitable ilkhani on the 3d April, we rode for a distance of eighteen miles over the treeless plains, covered at this season by luxuriant pasturage with here and there patches of fine wheat and barley, encountering a violent storm of wind and rain before we arrived, perfectly drenched, at the town of Dizfúl, a place once of great importance, which stands out in bold relief in a well-cultivated tract on the left bank of a river bearing the same name.

The stream, which is here unfordable, flows in a bed five hundred yards wide, between conglomerate cliffs, forty feet high, on the side opposite to the town. Stern-wheeled steamers of good horsepower, drawing three feet, could possibly reach this town by the Ab-i-Dizfúl at all seasons. The houses here are well constructed, chiefly of stone, with fairly lofty and spacious rooms built round a courtyard, surrounded by high walls, and provided with subterranean *sardabs* similar to those of Shustar. The flat roofs enable the inhabitants during the summer months to sleep on the tops of their houses. The outskirts of the town are in ruins, although the centre position is well preserved; but the streets are narrow, difficult to traverse, and, like all those in this part of Persia, in dreadful want of sanitary reform. Indeed Persians seem to be blissfully unconscious of the odors arising from the open cess-pits, latrines, and such like; for three such foul outlets

actually face the very apartments of the palace, occupied daily by the prince when here resident.

During the absence of this prince-governor we were offered the use of his apartments, but in the face of this *Shirdz tribute of perfume*, I excused myself from this honor, and we became the guests of the deputy wizar, Hajji Hashem, a very perfect specimen of one class of Persian official and gentleman. Thus he would promise great things, but perform nothing. He would not permit any forage to be purchased by us, yet starved our horses. Notwithstanding the reserve that is imposed upon a guest by custom of courtesy, it was absolutely necessary on this occasion to break through it, and to remark in unmistakable terms upon conduct so calculated to render himself, his office, and the nation he represented, so despicable in the eyes of a foreign traveler. His incivility was in deep contrast to the treatment we had experienced from Mirza Jhan of Shustar, who was his foil in every way—an excellent host, and a courteous gentleman to boot.

No official in this unhappy part of Persia seems to have any work to do; or if he has by chance any duty that he should perform, he takes great care to leave it undone. It might be thought that a deputy wizar would have had a few letters to write, some reports to make, some little business, financial or judicial, to interest him and his superiors; but such did not seem to be the case at Dizfúl. The wizar spent his time in chatting with the *saiyids*, who, here as elsewhere, presuming on their descent from Ali, consider themselves privileged to present themselves everywhere, and with other idlers who lived equally useless lives, smoked the *kalian* all day.

I met here a *saiyid* from India, according to his own account brother of the *tahsildar* of Rawal Pindi, who bemoaned his unhappy fate. He had, it appeared, been robbed of everything that he had embarked in trade by some of the tribesmen a few miles outside Dizfúl. He entreated me not to attempt to pass north of the town, lest I should meet with the same fate as had befallen him.

The soil round Dizfúl is rich and fertile, growing luxuriant pasture and fine crops of wheat, barley, poppy, etc., where cultivated; but a small proportion, however, of cereals is planted on the arable tracts. Dizfúl, like Shustar, is in fact but a ruined city. Here, as elsewhere in this part of Persia, one meets with the same

complaints of no government, no trade, and no security of life or property. Indeed it was only necessary to look around on the rich but uncultivated soil, on the ruins of towns and villages, the want of population, to see rivers without traffic, canals disused, and the general decadence of a once well-populated and fertile country, to judge how it must have been caused by the general misgovernment and mal-administration by the rulers of the territory, who are openly contemned by all classes of men everywhere in Persia, even in the presence of the governors who are responsible for the wretchedness of their province. "*If the shahs rob, why should not we?*" is the question asked by the extortionate khans and wizens, who oppress the agricultural peasants as well as the hill robbers who plunder the caravans. Past Moslem misrule has converted the splendid province of Susiana, once a veritable Garden of Eden, into a now almost desolate wilderness.

Luristan has been identified by Oriental scholars as the ancient Elymaïd and the country of the primitive Cossæi, a race of mountaineers renowned for brigandage, and therefore not unlike the modern Feili Lurs who have succeeded them; and M. de Stammer believes Dizfúl to be the site of the city of Elymais, famous for its splendid temple sacred to Dîana.

The Persian style of dress is worn at Dizfúl, consisting of a high or low felt or lambskin hat, a frock coat plaited at the waist, with a stand-up collar and buttons down the centre; the trousers wide, of cloth, much resembling *pyjama*s in shape. Black and blue are here considered to be the most respectable colors.

The captain manfully professed  
That the bright scarlet was the best;  
While black—it was not very civil—  
Was the known livery of the devil.

Our party was now fully organized and equipped. It consisted of myself and Shahsowar, the Madras cook, one Persian personal attendant, and two Persian grooms in charge of four horses, besides two muleteers, eight mules, and a following composed of two runagates, who for their own purposes attached themselves to our party, one of whom was a deserter from the Persian army, the other a thorough scoundrel, who was eventually ejected for attempting to commit a robbery. Our grooms were soldiers belonging to regiments recruited from the district of Khoramábád, who, having been without pay for months, had pawned even their muskets—

government property — and they, as well as the personal attendant, were taken out of pawn to follow our service. It was a source of regret that of necessity I had to present the deputy wizar, who had nearly starved both ourselves and our horses, with a *khalat* of third-rate material, on bidding him adieu. Through his influence, moreover, we obtained mule-carriage at seven times the market rate, no *charwadar* being willing to meet his fee and run the risk of the passage as well through the hills of the Lurs, now to be attempted.

Leaving Dizfúl on the afternoon of the 5th April, we made a forced march of twenty-one hours' duration, in order to join the Sagwand tribe of Lurs, covering in that time a distance of forty-five miles. At starting, we first crossed the river Ab-i-Dizfúl, then in full flood, by a brick bridge four hundred and thirty yards long,\* over twenty-two arches with heavy pointed buttresses against the stream, which is utilized above the bridge to turn many flour-mills.

Passing the royal pleasure-house, and traversing the plain known as the Sahra-i-Lur, we entered the low hills and crossed the river-bed of the Bala-Rud by a ford rendered difficult by the floods, one of the baggage-mules being carried off some distance by the current. He lay down and resolutely attempted to drown himself, and was with difficulty recovered.

At about nine miles out the hills are reached, when, passing over a varied country of rolling hills, affording good pasture to the flocks of the Iliyats, whose camps were dotted here and there, by half past ten at night we had made some twenty-five miles, and had attained an elevation of a thousand feet, when we halted for a couple of hours to refresh and graze the animals. Recommencing our march at 1 A.M. on the sixth, through swampy ground, and past a small fort, across deep ravines, and over the Bidruge plain, whence we rose through intricate rocky hills, only again to descend into the Kala Rezza valley by a stony path, we joined the encampment of the Sagwand Lurs at 9.45, after being about nineteen hours in the saddle.

This country between Dizfúl and Kala Rezza was well known to be infested with robbers, and Hajji Hashem had been directed by the Ihtisham-ul-Sultanah to

make special arrangements for the safe convoy of our small party, and he had promised accordingly an escort of horsemen; but no such escort was forthcoming, and when I inquired at starting, Hajji Hashem earnestly assured me that the cavalry escort had been sent on in front, when in truth no escort whatever had been provided. Several people belonging to Dizfúl, anxious to reach Khoramábád under our protection, joined the party, and numerous were the prayers and many the prostrations of the devout *saiyids* of their number.

Indeed, the character of the Feili Lurs occupying these hills was of the worst possible repute. They were, no doubt, then\* (1884) thoroughly intractable and lawless in the extreme; but were their chiefs treated with firmness and justice, robbery and murder ruthlessly but continuously repressed, and only an equitable revenue exacted from them, perfect security would soon reign throughout these now impassable hills, and commerce would again flow in its natural channel *vis à vis* Shushtar to the gulf.

The more one sees of the nomadic life, whether amongst Mongols, Turks, Kurds, Lurs, or Persians, the more one becomes convinced that unjust government alone can be the cause of poverty amongst its followers. They have at command, as a rule, all the elements of prosperity, including a fertile soil, numerous flocks, rich pasture; and there is no reason to suppose that they are more lazy and improvident than others, or less careful or ignorant of their own good and well-being. They are often spoken of as *yaghi*, or rebellious; this must be taken simply to mean that, being unable to meet excessive demands, they resist them. The people of such countries as Persia, where there is no government in the true sense of the word, hold in their own hands the check to the exercise of excessive and arbitrary power, and use it when occasion demands. All Iliyats or nomads are sybarite shepherds and herdsmen, whose existence is only possible in sparsely populated countries. Rather than cut and stack hay, thereby rendering a wandering life unnecessary, and thus allowing them to till the soil — as soon as the sun browns it, they leave it standing and migrate with their flocks to the greener pastures of more elevated tracts and cooler regions. By the substitution of systematically planned

\* "On remarque encore dans le Kouzistan, à proximité des ruines de Suse, la ville de Dizfoul, où l'on voit un des plus beaux ponts de la Perse," writes M. le Dr Cte Meyners d'Estrey (Annales de l'extrême Orient).

\* I understand that Hajji Ali has, since this was written, met his fate at the hands of his masters. Caravans are now said to pass along this route (1889).

for spontaneous vegetation, all the elements of wealth, a commercial spirit, power to export and to import, follow in due course of time. This is the most immediate source of wealth to be hoped for in south-west Persia.

With Hajji Ali Khan\* we found a thousand families of the Sagwund Lurs encamped. Some five hundred other families acknowledge his brother, with whom he is at enmity. He described his tribe as being impoverished by government exactions which they were unable to meet.

Many deeds of cruelty and severity are laid to the charge of this freebooter; and perhaps nothing can instance the increasing power now being exercised by the government of Persia over these lawless tribes, and the restraint that their chiefs have been forced to put themselves under, than the conduct of Hajji Ali Khan during our sojourn with him. Notwithstanding the letter from the ilkhani of the Bakhtiari, he at first received our party very coldly and inhospitably. He sent answer: "Go to the bridge, and pass over!" knowing full well that there was no bridge to cross then, and that life was not worth a day's purchase beyond the Ab-i-Zal. We could only obtain supplies with difficulty, and not until they were asked for.

Soon, however, the honorable treatment accorded to us by the Persian officials and Bakhtiari chiefs became known, and it was rumored that I was a *sartip* (general) called to Tih-ran by the shah to join the army, and that I was about to visit the Zil-ul-Sultan, the only man feared in these hills. These rumors had been evidently fostered by the resident wizar at Dizful as the only available means of securing from Hajji Ali fair treatment for us. At all events, the desired end was gained; my credit was established, and I became the guest of the shameless Hajji, who directed the tribe to sell to us whatever provisions we required.

Hajji Ali himself, his numerous sons, and the Sharif-ul-Din, a *mula* who travelled with him, frequently visited our camp to chat and smoke, and they seemed never to weary of admiring our arms, clothes, saddlery, etc., whilst Shahsowar and myself daily passed some time in the darbar tent with them. The Lurs are a simple-minded people; the men light-hearted and joyous, of wiry frame, and

well knit to endure fatigue. Indeed, not a single short or fat man or woman did I see amongst them. The females go unveiled, and so we could see that the young women were well-favored, with ruddy cheeks and dark-auburn or black hair, which they dress in ringlets — a *coiffure* which gives to the old women a remarkably weird appearance, especially as they age early. Their usual dress consists of wide red trousers, and long, flowing, ungainly gown, without shape, hanging loosely about their person from the neck downwards, affording insufficient warmth with the scanty underclothing. Many of them go shoeless; and the children go about so poorly clad, that none but the very fittest can survive the hardships of their early existence.

The richer ladies, however, wear silks of gay colors, and dress more in the Persian style, but without veils. They cover their bosoms with silver ornaments when they can afford to do so, and some cut their eyebrows to shape, and use dye. Hajji Ali had twenty-five wives, the more favored ones being dressed in bright silks in harmonious Oriental taste, whilst the others were poorly clad. A chief's influence with the tribes naturally increases with the number of wives which he can afford to keep, as his sons and daughters intermarry with those of other chieftains of neighboring and distant tribes.

One of the ladies in Hajji Ali's camp was most pressing in her endeavors to marry one of her daughters to me, an honor which I was happily enabled to decline on the plea that whilst Hajji Ali's guest, I was his son, and all his family were my brothers and sisters, and that, besides, I was not desirous of adding to my *impedimenta* during my travels.\*

This offer of marriage, which was very bluntly made in all good faith, points to

\* This temptation of St. Anthony was put before me in such a matter-of-fact manner by my would-be mother-in-law before the whole tribe, that made it evident that match-making is not confined to civilized countries. "Have you a wife?" "No." "Then you *must* want one, and I have two young and beautiful daughters; take your choice! I only want a dowry of fifty tomans" (I am not certain that it was not *five* only that was asked, but we never got to the stage of haggling over the price). "Either of them is just the sort of girl that will suit you. They can milk sheep, pitch a tent, and bake bread to perfection." In vain I pointed out that in my country such qualifications were not those required in a wife. She would banter me as we marched along, causing much amusement amongst her hearers. As they spoke Turki, I could only catch an idea of what they were talking about from the few words of Persian used. Shahsowar understood more than I did, and remarked that they were "a people without shame." The life of a nomad, indeed, is not calculated to teach modesty, for stud operations are carried on before the tents, females assisting.

\* Hajji Ali Khan was a regular "chip of the old block," being descended from Kalb Ali Khan, the murderer of Captains Grant and Fotheringham, for refusing to profess Mahammadanism. Loftus refers to him and his tribe in very uncomplimentary terms.

the fact that the uninstructed of these tribes are rather Ali Ilahis than orthodox Mahammadans, notwithstanding that their chiefs are often bigoted Moslems. The Ali Ilahis believe in successive incarnations of the Deity, of which the chief were in the persons of Benjamin, David, and Ali — a strange combination of idolatry, superstition, Judaism, and Mahammadanism.

The life of the women of the Lur tribe is a hard one. They perform all household duties, tend the flocks, milk the sheep, weave yarn and carpets, help to strike, pack, and pitch their tents, churn and clarify the milk and butter, — the latter, a most wearying task, being carried on in the very early morning or at midnight. The milk is churned in skins, suspended from the pole of the tent or beam of the roof, which are worked by the arms in pairs, backwards and forwards, by a woman seated on the ground between them. This hard work, sleeping and sitting on the damp ground, with insufficient clothing and exposure, sufficiently accounts for their prematurely aged appearance.

The women applied for charms to bring back the lost love of a husband, lost generally by reason of their sterility, and to induce childbirth. They were particularly anxious to obtain amulets to be worn on the caps of their infant sons, with the idea that the fortune of the giver would follow the child throughout life; and, to this extent, I became sponsor to the most infantile of Hajji Ali's many sons. I at times hope that we may meet again. Of course all the sick, sorry, and the most aged in the tribe came for medicine; ordinary pills, however, had but little effect; but when six failed to satisfy, I threw up the case.

When the ladies' ailments were such as to require the administration of charms and philtres, and I recommended them to carry their requests to Ali in whom they trusted, they received the idea as an excellent joke. For hours one poor woman stood at the entrance of my tent, praying for a charm, for but a small piece of paper with writing on it, to bring back to her the love of her husband, who had taken to himself a second wife. I could but refuse to debase my religion by pandering to their simple belief in me as a worker of miracles.

Unmolested, I was allowed to move about the camps of the various families, — each family, or group of families, camped on the pasture-land told off for it, and

each with its flocks and herds took the road assigned to it on the march. The confusion on the line of march surpasses all description; sheep, goats, bullocks, donkeys, horsemen, and foot-passengers, blocked the narrow hill-paths; the cries of the herdsmen and herdswomen "*Ab-o-ka*," re-echoed everywhere; and when, in the narrow ravines, the pressure and the crush were the greatest, the chiefs would add to the hubbub and confusion (*tama-sha*, or spectacle, as they termed it) by discharging their Peabody rifles, of which weapon the whole tribe possessed about a dozen. Naturally great interest was taken in my movements, and the production of my notebook excited special curiosity. Many were the exclamations of "What does he write?"

I found the subjects of conversation most interesting to the Lur chiefs to be those bearing on our political relations with Russia, Turkey, Egypt, and Afghanistan; our marriage laws and social customs; the nature of our pastures and streams, and whether we had summer and winter quarters as good and beautiful as theirs. Great Britain is chiefly known to them as London, and their sympathetic admiration was lavished particularly on Turkey and Egypt for having spent such vast sums of foreign money, and on the former especially for declining to repay them. Repudiation was evidently their ideal of true financial policy.

Russia was, indeed, looked upon as a great power, but the influence of England was fully recognized as superior to that of the czar throughout Luristan; and they respected the vast wealth of England, and the power it conferred on her of raising an army of over a million men all told — a proposition easily demonstrated, but perhaps not very readily proved. It was generally believed that the amir ruled over Afghanistan solely by our favor, and that Afghanistan was a British possession, — an opinion which my friend Shahsowar loyally supported.

It was curious to notice what great interest was everywhere taken in the movements of the Madhi. (This, it must be remembered, was shortly after our evacuation of the Soudan.) Rumors that the dervishes had gained great victories over the British were firmly believed, and no denial was accepted — indeed it was generally hinted to me that it was quite natural that I should prefer not to acknowledge a defeat. This sympathy for the Soudanese dervish was, nevertheless, more political than religious with them,



for they cherished a vague hope that, should a Mahammadan conqueror vanquish the leading Christian power, he might eventually restore again the ancient fortunes of Islamism. Our late withdrawal from the Soudan was certainly construed as a Christian defeat and a victory for Mahammadanism.

Every statement made by a Persian, whether prince or peasant, must be received with the utmost caution, and never believed until verified. His mind is of that pretentious nature by which a stunted tree is magnified into a forest of noble oaks, a collection of mud hovels into a populous town, a few field-guns into a park of heavy artillery, and a dozen horse-men into a regiment of cavalry. With regard to religion, also, the Mahammadan tenets did not appear to be very strictly observed among the Lurs. Hajji Ali certainly observed outwardly the hours of prayer, but only because, perhaps, the Sharif-ul-Din, to whom he was greatly indebted for a money loan to enable him to meet the demands of the revenue officers, was his guest.

My host and his sons were so pleased with the Martini-Henry cavalry carbines carried by Shahsowar and myself, that they became possessed by an inordinate desire to obtain one of these weapons somehow or other, and a significant message was conveyed to me from this hospitable Hajji that either by friendship, or *other means*, one of the rifles *must* be his—an insolent message that put me on my mettle, and indicated that my bandit host meant business.

On my declining to meet this civil demand half-way, and after I had returned a colt sent for my acceptance, on the excuse that there was no groom available to lead it, he instigated his immediate attendants to take by foul means what he could not obtain in a fair manner.

His hospitality confined itself to directing that a tent should be provided for me, and furnishing me with home-made bread and a sort of treacle for breakfast. Once only did he send me a dish of meat from his evening meal.

Meantime it took the tribe three days to throw a rough bridge of trees, which had to be brought from long distances, over the Ab-i-Zal, at a point where rocks narrowed it to a width of from fifteen to twenty feet across; and, this accomplished, we left our camp on that stream on the 8th of April, and passed with the migrating tribe, in slow and short stages of seven to twelve miles, between two

steep and parallel ranges, through the Theodor valley and along the base and perpendicular sides of the northern or Kheolah range, which rise from five hundred to one thousand feet over the road. At one point, in the Saimarra valley, a single arch is thrown across the Karkha River where it contracts from a general width of a hundred yards and flows through a narrow chasm which a bold cragsman can leap. The view up the valley leads one to anticipate no difficulties in the direction of the Chul pass. The hills, which are largely composed of decomposed gypsum, have the appearance of being covered with snow.

On the second day the bugle sounded an early start, and marching by several parallel routes, we passed where the Leylum stream flows through a narrow and deep rift through the Kheolah range; and on the third we camped close to another gorge, that of the Ab-i-Fani, where passage over the hills is practicable only by climbing the precipitous ledges to the west of it. Nevertheless in the valleys, among these apparently desolate mountains, are to be found fertile spots with excellent soil capable of growing all sorts of cereal crops, and other more extended undulating tracts of country, known as the *chul*,\* or desert.

At length on the eighth day we halted at an elevation of over four thousand feet on the Badamek plateau, where low oak and other trees covering the hillsides afford some cover, and, what is more, a good supply of firewood. I had, indeed, been led to expect to meet with considerable forests of oak during the passage of the hills, but found the belt of country producing them to be not fifty miles broad, the timber but poor and of small size, and the trees anything but plentiful.

Although the road is in places difficult, in the main it is an easy mule-track, crossing no formidable passes, and traversing pasture-lands and valleys, with, as heretofore, extensive patches of fertile and arable soil. It has no settled habitations; and as our tribe was, as it were, making a forced passage through the pasture-lands of inimical fellow-tribesmen, none of the latter showed themselves.

\* This *chul* near Valmian was well watered and covered with pasture when seen in April. Water may be scarce during the summer months; the undulations should produce a good winter crop of cereals. Persia, even here in its south-west corner, is emblematic of central Asia, inasmuch as it is a land of violent contrasts; at one time you traverse a barren, waterless waste, and an hour later you are perhaps wading through pasture up to the knees, well irrigated by babbling brooks.

Here, on the night of the 15th April, our horses were purposely cut loose, with intent to draw Shahsowar from my tent, where he always slept; and during the confusion which ensued, an attempt was made by some of Hajji Ali's following to rob the wished-for rifles, placed for safety under his pillow. This audacious project was, however, frustrated, as I was expecting some such attempt, and was on the alert in time to prevent mischief. Had I but been habituated to run barefooted over stones, I should have caught the man who searched the bedding for the rifle. From this date two of our party were placed nightly as sentries over the camp, and all baggage was packed in a heap.

We next passed through the Dalich pass, by which a line of telegraph, connecting Tihlán with Dizfúl, passed a few years since, but the line has been destroyed, and the *sarais* and post-houses razed by the Lurs. While pressed on all sides by the crowd endeavoring to push across the narrow bridge over the Kulohu stream beyond the Ab-i-Sard on the 18th April, some of the bolder ruffians tried to wrest his rifle from Shahsowar, without success.

The ill-will of Hajji Ali vented itself in petty annoyances after this; he sent me no bread and treacle for breakfast, and let me bake out in the open all day. I took no notice of this behavior, nor of the hints given to me by the mula, who had been my friend throughout, to give him a rifle. I drank tea with him as usual, when he complained that he was suffering from fever. One of his numerous daughters also annoyed him by taking the opportunity of my presence to petition for a pair of shoes, she being shoeless.

Shahsowar receiving notice from a friend at court that we might expect a night attack, I had the baggage carefully packed, and arranged with him that if attacked we should together retire to Hajji Ali's tent and thence open fire upon it—a manœuvre likely to perplex both him and some of his party attempting the robbery, as the latter would be unable to return our fire.

We were now only thirty miles from Khoramábád, and I resolved to make a forced march after passing the Nal-shis-kandah, or *Horseshoe-breaking* pass, into Khoramábád. Passing on next day beyond his camp, I was carrying out this intention when I was headed by a dozen of his horsemen, and disarmed. Riding back to where he was halted, surrounded by the whole of his mounted followers, I

gave the chief a piece of my mind, and I did not hesitate to characterize his inhospitable conduct as that of a thief and a coward, and as unworthy of a chief of his high standing. I accompanied my indignant protest with some very unpalatable expressions, in which my friend Shahsowar backed me up well, and I not only made a direct accusation of theft, but appealed to the holy mula of the party—the Sharif-ul-Din—to witness the truth of my indictment, and the justice of my cause. This public reprimand, administered openly before his people, had due effect in completely cowing the spirit of my host, the chief of the Sagwands.

An attempt at robbery similar to that made on the eighteenth was repeated on the twentieth, the day before reaching Khoramábád, and the theft was openly accomplished in my sight. However, the thief was easily recognized as one of Hajji Ali's body-retainers; and word having been sent to that chief that the robber could be identified, and that I would compass his destruction if the weapon were not *found*, he caused the rifle to be returned to me. On this occasion also I appealed to the holy mula. Subsequently he sent several of his sons to explain to me that he, in truth, had not robbed me, but that the thieves were a band from one of the neighboring tribes at enmity with him. Being, therefore, yet in his power and in his hands, I acquiesced in, without accepting, his lame excuses, and gave up my intention of escaping from him by a forced march into Khoramábád, on its being pointed out to me, that to do so without an escort, which Hajji Ali, whilst demanding a receipt from myself for my body, refused to give, would be to court destruction, and to give to my robber host the opportunity he desired. Notwithstanding this altercation with the chief, the tribesmen looked on me with no ill-favor; for my would-be mother-in-law, accompanied by her youngest daughter, made, towards evening, their final attack upon me. My camp-bed pitched in the open took her fancy. She examined the blankets, and approved. "Ah," said she, "everything so nice, and yet you won't marry my daughter!" "How can I? You see that I am tentless and possess no sheep, and others now graze theirs on my paternal Yorkshire acres." I laughed and turned, and they walked away, the maiden petulantly throwing a stone to the ground, as much as to say, "You call yourself a man, do you?" I took leave without regret of Hajji Ali, although we parted good

friends. I never admired any of his horses without his saying — "It is yours, take him!" according to usual Persian etiquette. After his unseemly and menacing demand, and subsequent attempts to thieve one of my rifles, it was, of course, impossible to present him with one; but as the services of his tribe had been of the utmost value to me, I left with the ilkhani of the Bakhtiari, when I again met him later on, a brace of cavalry pistols to be presented to Ali's eldest son. As the chief of the Sagwands had necessarily heard that I had given presents to all officials of distinction at Ahwáz, Shustar, and Dizfúl, my omission to satisfy his exhibition of greed must have been very galling to his pride, and more especially as every man and woman of the exodus so well knew that he had preferred the demand and been refused.

During the passage of the hills several attempts at robbing were made by the neighboring tribes, and our neighbors lost several mules. The barking of the watchdog when the camps were pitched in the vicinity of the Dalich pass, the most dangerous part of the hills, was incessant.

Between Badamek and Khoramábád the hilly country presents no topographical difficulties to the construction of a cart-road with gentle gradients; the air of the hills is temperate and salubrious; water is plentiful, and of good quality; the pasture-lands are abundant and excellent; the snow never falls in sufficient quantity to block the existing animal tracks. The chief difficulty experienced in traversing the present main caravan-route is the number of loose boulders strewn along it, and which it is no one's business to remove, and in the large boulders blocking it in the ravines, by climbing and descending which the track crosses over the defiles. These obstructions can be readily removed, in which case a caravan of mules could pass from Dizfúl to Khoramábád in six or seven days at the outside; and with the Kárún open to Shustar, Khoramábád could then be reached from the gulf in ten or eleven days. Thence to Tihrán is three hundred miles, a journey of fourteen days by caravan. There are no villages along the road, nor did we meet here any Iliyats, or see their camps, for all had probably, as before remarked, moved to a distance for fear of the Sagwand tribe, which was in full force.

The main ranges about the valley and basin of the Ab-i-Sard are steep, barren, and in May were still capped with snow. They rise out of undulations fairly cov-

ered with pasture, and growing a few stunted oaks. The country for thirty miles out of Khoramábád may be described as consisting of huge rolling grassy hills, separated by valleys five hundred feet deep, their slopes at times gentle, at others as steep as one in three. The height of the Dalich pass, the highest elevation attained, at forty-five miles from Khoramábád is six thousand feet, and that of the Nal-shiskandah fifty-eight hundred feet at twenty-two miles from the same town.

We at last arrived at our destination, Khoramábád, one hundred and fifty-six miles from Dizfúl, on the afternoon of the 20th April, after traversing a shockingly bad track, down a narrow ravine full of boulders, and fording with great difficulty the Khoramábád River, then three feet deep and one hundred feet wide; and we were delighted on nearing the town to find groves of hawthorn, poplars, and gardens full of fruit-trees in their first bloom, their vernal colors brightening the landscape, which had hitherto been of a grander nature, but wanting in green tints. At the outskirts of the town a ruined minaret, an antique sculptured stone, and other remains of former magnificence, betoken the remains of the once famous capital of the Atabegs, who flourished here during the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. Passing these, we crossed the river by a solid bridge of masonry three hundred yards long, and entered the modern town, the chief town of the Feili Lurs.

Khoramábád lies on the high plateau\* of mid-Persia, at an elevation of four thousand and fifty feet above the sea, at the head of a gorge, and to the north of an extensive valley. It contains upwards of two thousand inhabitants, and is the residence of the ruler of Luristan, which district extends southwards as far as Dizfúl. Owing to the insecurity of the road to this last-named place, trade has become stagnated, and the town is rapidly falling into ruins; however, it still boasts of Persian post and telegraph offices.

I was well received by Shahzada Sharuk Mirza, the deputy wízir, acting for the Ikhumut-i-Daulat, the governor of the district, who had been summoned to Tihrán to answer for the lawlessness of his command — for which neglect he was, I heard, deposed and disgraced. I paid a visit to the colonel of the infantry regiment camped

\* The Iranian plateau, part of the elevated land which lies between the Indus and the Tigris.

here, who treated me with courtesy in the usual Persian manner, serving tea, etc.

At Khoramábád we were accommodated in a summer-house, within the outer walls of the fort, which is built on the summit of a solitary steep rock near the centre of the gorge, and close to and overlooking the right bank of the river. Round about its base are fine gardens, well irrigated, and dwelling-houses, all surrounded by walls of no great solidity. Our view from the Bala Hisar in the early dawn was a picturesque one, for snow-wreaths yet lay on the distant mountain-tops, whilst in the middle distance the sombre tints of the barren hills contrasted with the warmer colors of the bridge with its pointed arches, under which flowed the swollen and turbid waters of the river, which showed up well against the vivid hues of the foliage and vegetation on the banks in the foreground.

The gardens of this fortress are well stocked with rose-bushes and pomegranates, interspersed with fine cypresses, on the highest branches of which flamingoes are wont to roost. Both days and nights are cool at this season of the year, and therefore the climate and surrounding scenery combined to make our brief glimpse of Khoramábád very enjoyable. On our departure the Shahzada furnished us with a guide, and two sowars of the telegraphic department attached themselves to our party, for the sake, we suppose, of our fellowship by the way. As for the guide, his own private object was simply to graze his mare and her filly, so he very soon left us to steer our course as we best could.

The dangers of the hill-country from the tribes in revolt had now ceased, and although there are no *caravansarais* along this road, we found quarters for the night in one or other of the dirty huts in the villages through which we passed.

Our route now followed the telegraph line, and after traversing the grassy Dara Daraz valley, lying amidst gravelly conical hills, we surmounted the crest of the Buluhan, where we found the snow lying at six thousand eight hundred feet elevation. The country here is treeless and produces no firewood, water being obtainable from streams, which are numerous. Although the grazing is excellent, little of the soil is cultivated, the district being still very sparsely populated. We halted on the twenty-first at a few mud huts beneath the Zaghe pass, and the following day, passing over huge grassy undulations and rounded hills of gravel and

clay of easy slopes, with deep clay in the valleys, descended to Chulunchulan, two thousand feet lower. We reached the important city of Búrújird, picturesquely situated at the head of a fertile valley, at noon on the 23d April, sixty-three miles from Khoramábád.

Búrújird is a large and thriving town of seventeen thousand inhabitants or so, and it was most refreshing to European eyes to witness here the activity and signs of business, in such utter contrast to the almost total annihilation of all trade along the route we had traversed since leaving the coast.

The town (elevated fifty-four hundred feet above the sea-level, the seat of the ruler of the district, with post and telegraph offices, neither of which is very efficient) is surrounded by a mud wall from four to six miles in circumference, and entered by five gates. In every Persian town ruined houses are commonly noticeable, and Búrújird formed no exception to this universal rule. The streets are narrow and dirty, often mere footpaths, and much out of repair. The houses, chiefly constructed of mud, with the flat roofs common throughout the district, are also in bad repair, and less spacious than those of Dizfúl and Shustar. Nor can I speak highly of the sanitary condition of the town. As I was the first Englishman who had visited the place for unknown years, I was rather annoyed by the inhabitants, who crowded round the doorless room in which I took up my quarters in the *sarai* — an inconvenience that led to my nailing up a carpet across it as a screen to ensure privacy. The place is noted for its cottons, of local manufacture, which are well suited to Oriental taste. The climate of the elevated valley in which it is situated is cool and healthy, although exposure to the sun's powerful rays in the heat of summer and autumn should be avoided.

The valley, watered by the Ab-i-Dizfúl, is thickly studded with villages, here met with for the first time in our journey. Here, also for the first time, we found the pursuit of agriculture seriously attempted. The neighboring tract is fairly well cultivated, but still leaves much to be desired in that respect. Vines thrive and the grapes ripen in September, whilst the wheat and barley crops are harvested in July. With the exception of a few willows and poplars growing round the villages, the country is still generally treeless. The streams and irrigation canals are numerous, but there are no wells.

From its situation, the great commercial value of Búrújird as a mercantile centre on the main artery of traffic between the Gulf and central Persia, with caravan-roads radiating to all the fertile agricultural and commercial districts of Persia, is readily apparent.

The line Muhammerah, Dizfúl, Khoramábád, Búrújird, Sultánábád, Kúm, Tihrán, may be considered to be the main commercial artery of Persia. A line of railway from Tihrán to the Gulf should doubtless approximately follow it, for the country is more favorable to its construction on this line than on others confined to Persian territory, and its geographical features also favor the construction of feeders to it from Hamadán, Karmánshah, and Isfahán.

Although we were about to pass over a country part nomad, part settled, there was now no longer any necessity to seek guides or other aid from Persian officials; so we travelled without escort, and arranged for our own accommodation in villages where sarais did not exist. Numerous beggars line the main caravan avenues leading to and from the town, whose solicitations to Allah to protect our persons and prosper our aims we cheaply bought at the cost of the smallest of copper coins.

From Búrújird onward our stage was twenty-two miles to Zaleon, along a hard and firm mule-track, traversing huge rounded undulations of gentle slopes rising to heights of eight thousand feet, and our chief difficulties consisted, as heretofore, in crossing the numerous snow rivulets. Heavy snow had fallen over this region a fortnight before we crossed it, and snow still lay in the hollows of the hills. The scene before entering the Khushk-i-Durr valley, a few miles south of Zaleon, was a striking one. In all directions we could see the tops of the brown, barren undulations covered with patches of snow, with green oases of cultivation here and there apparent in the bottoms of the deeper valleys.\* As before, the whole country is treeless excepting a few poor poplars grown round each village; and as no shrubs are cultivated, firewood is scarcely procurable—the villagers using dried dung as fuel to warm their houses. The villages themselves are small and poor, and their inhabitants almost universally marked with small-pox. Some of the houses, which are built of

mud, are double-storied, with very low doorways, so constructed on account of the very great cold at this elevation, where snow at times lies deep. The rooms of these huts are fairly high and of some size,—altogether superior to those of the generality of Indian peasant villages.

The past winter had been a most severe one, and this route had been closed by snow for the three previous months. We now found the wheat sprouting in some places, whilst ploughing was still going on in others. As a rule, snow blocks the road for one month only—from the middle of January to the middle of February. Pack-tracks only become impassable from snow in these elevated regions from disuse, if caravans pass over them.

Our next ride, on the twenty-fifth, took us fourteen miles over the rich Mirza Khatir valley and through the Tang-i-Tura—the roadway through the Roswand range, where the track joins the Hamadán telegraph road; and henceforth the road, though unformed, is generally level and good. Notwithstanding the elevations we had passed (eight thousand feet), the ascents and descents were not found to be steep;† and another stage of twenty-four miles took us to Sultánábád, through a district dotted with several clusters of villages, and with walled vineyards surrounding many of them.

Sultánábád, a town with an active trade † (population about seven thousand), lies in the wide, populous, and well-cultivated valley of the Ab-i-Kallaru, in the midst of an important agricultural and manufacturing district, where plenty of corn is grown, the vine flourishes, and the surrounding hills are covered with pastures and flocks of sheep and goats. The first view we obtained of this valley was the finest sight we had seen since leaving the sea, and the general effect of the *coup-d'œil* was heightened by the contrasting shadows of cloud and sunlight on the extensive stretch of bare downs and cultivated vales under a thunderstorm which was passing overhead.

The villages round about give evidence of the prosperity of their inhabitants, who are largely employed in the manufacture of rugs and carpets. The town itself is cleaner and laid out with far greater regularity than most Persian towns; and although the water, flowing in open gut-

\* All views from the crests of the elevations passed over are of this nature, for from them the barren hill-tops only are to be seen, the pastures and cultivation in the valleys being generally hidden from view.

† The general elevation of the valley was from sixty-eight to sixty-nine hundred feet.

† The town occupies an area of about a quarter of a square mile, and is surrounded by a mud wall falling into decay. Post and telegraph offices are here established.



ters, affords but a contaminated supply of drinking-water, the townspeople appeared of excellent *physique*, both men and women being fair-complexioned.

After halting a day, to change carriage and enjoy the society of Mr. Ziegler's agent, we proceeded fourteen miles, still through a treeless country over mostly uncultivated plains, on which a low prickly thorn grows, but dotted here and there with villages surrounded by cultivated fields and fringed with poplars, to Shahuw, a large village. The women here go unveiled, and wear short petticoats whose skirts reach but little below their knees. The following day, passing several villages and increased cultivation, we stayed for the night at Ibrahimabad, a large place with two caravansarais. Around these villages fruit-trees flourish, such as apples, plums, and pomegranates. Rhubarb of good quality is here grown, and the vineyards are extensive.

The cold in these highlands is often excessive, the thermometer falling to zero, and snow lying three feet deep. From the great want of timber, the mud huts of these villages are roofed in with domes of mud bricks; and the frost splitting them, causes them not unfrequently to fall in, giving a very forlorn appearance to the buildings, and necessitating their annual renewal in spring. Why on earth the Persians cannot use as a building material the excellent stone which abounds everywhere in and near the hills, can only be explained by saying that they are Orientals, and do as most Asiatics are wont to do.

Another day's journey of thirty-two miles through the districts known as the Mahal-i-Ferahan and the Mahal-i-Kalatch (the former noted for its excellent carpets), and along a good road which offers no difficulties and passes through the village of Raugird at twenty-three miles, brought us to Anet-beg, an insignificant station in a valley. Then after a ride of twenty miles across a stony barren plain, where a few camels were grazing, we surmounted the neck of the Zaleon ridge, whence we caught sight of the golden dome of the Imamzada of Kúm, seven miles away, and glowing like a ball of fire in the sunshine; a welcome sight, which was hailed with acclamations of delight by the muleteers. When we rode into the Mihman-Khana or guest-house, Shahsowar Khan and myself had accomplished our ride of five hundred and thirty-five miles from the coast, and attained one of the objects of our projected trip.

The holy city of Kúm, the third city of Persia in point of sanctity, celebrated for its Imamzada, which is held in great veneration, as containing the tomb of Fatimah, the sister of the Imam Rezza, is a town containing some seven thousand inhabitants, although the Persians would give us to understand that its population is something more than double this figure.\*

It is on the left bank of the Ab-i-Khon-sar, a river which is spanned by a substantial stone bridge of nine arches, the central one being much the largest, of twenty feet span. Shops are numerous, the trade seemed active, and provisions were plentiful. We were told that, besides the merchants, shopkeepers, and artisans, all the other inhabitants were engaged in offices connected with the burial of the dead. It is, in fact, a city of undertakers, who derive their livelihood from the belief in the sanctity of their necropolis, and therefore it goes without saying that they are, from motives of self-interest, extreme fanatics in their religious views.

Kúm lies thirty-four hundred feet above the sea,† and is surrounded by a mud wall of no strength or solidity, which is entered by gates, the chief of which alone has any architectural pretensions, being ornamented by variegated blue-and-green glazed tiles.

The wall is fronted by a partial ditch, and in places by ponds of stagnant water. Many of the houses fronting the river are two-storied, and provided with balconies, with roof either domed or flat. The town was destroyed by the Afghans, and much of it still is in ruins.

From my personal inspection of the route from the Persian Gulf to Kúm, it appears to me practicable to construct a cart-road from Muhammerah at the mouth of the Kárún, in three sections, as follows, viz. :—

First to Dizfúl, a distance of one hundred and seventy-three miles, over a country which is practically an alluvial flat, where the construction of a highway only requires raising and ditching, and to finish off which, a good supply of road-metal can be obtained from the hills about Ahwáz, Shustar, and Dizfúl.

\* There are many caravansarais within the city walls, and as the Imamzada is a Shi'ah shrine of pilgrimage, no doubt at times the floating population is a large one.

† The temperature, which early in May averages 75° indoors during the day, in July rises to over 90°. The nights are always cool, and the day temperature even in the hottest months less oppressive and exhausting than that of India.

Second, from Dizfúl to Khoramábád, a distance of one hundred and fifty-seven miles. With regard to the facilities for construction of a cart-road in this section, the track may be classed as *good, fair, and bad* in equal proportions, — viz., the *good*, one-third of the total distance, is level, and requires nothing beyond the removal of loose boulders; the *fair*, of an equal length, requiring only to be widened and cleared of stones; and the *bad*, of the remaining third fifty miles, where the road should be widened, and in places zigzagged to lessen the gradients. Here in the ravines and passes large boulders will have to be blasted, but otherwise there is little excavation or rock-cutting necessary; and picks, crowbars, levers, sledge-hammers, and a little gun-cotton, will do all that is wanted towards rendering the route open and safe for present traffic.

Third, from Khoramábád to Kúm, a distance of one hundred and forty-two miles; the facilities for converting the present mule-road into a good road for vehicular communication can be judged by applying the above classification, according to which I found three-fifths of the distance what might be termed *good*, one-fifth *fair*, and only one-fifth *bad* throughout this section.

Summing up, of the whole distance traversed from Muhammerah to Kúm, five hundred and thirty-five miles in all, we can class three hundred and fifty as *good*, one hundred as *fair*, and eighty as *bad*. Throughout this route the only river of any width to bridge is the Kárún. I calculate that the total cost of a practicable mercantile cart-track from twelve to fifteen feet wide in the hills, and thirty feet on the level, should not exceed on an average above two hundred rupees per mile.

Rapidly to convert the present mule-track into a cart-road, a thousand hill road-making coolies, such as the Hazara coolies, at one rupee a day, covering all expenses of importation, etc., should be employed, in addition to all local labor available — as what the road would cost, and what time would be spent in its construction if Persian labor were wholly trusted to, it is impossible to say. Under British superintendence, and with British Indian coolie labor, the above estimate would cover the cost, which would, however, probably be at least five times that amount with Persian management and local labor.

The construction of a railway must necessarily follow in the wake of a cart-road

which is a primary consideration. It has not been overlooked that our colonists, notably in Canada and Australia, have been wont to push their pioneer railways almost in advance of their roads; but they own enterprising capitalists, and can attract money by the security of a settled government and safety for the constructors of the lines; whereas in Persia, besides the engineering difficulties, there are neither carts nor cart-horses nor bullocks suited for heavy draught, few artisans, no increasing or enterprising population. The government has hitherto been an Oriental despotism of the well-known type, and the Asiatic system of proceeding in financial and administrative matters in full force, and we know what that means, — obstruction, mendacity, fraud, and bribery, with every species of corruption. Happily, the influence for good of the European diplomatic circles at Tihrán has of late years been considerable.

Concessions were continuously being made by the government of the shah to construct railways and reopen canals, etc., but they were as often rescinded. At last her Majesty's representative, Sir Drummond Wolff, has obtained the permission for "merchant steamers of all nations, without exception, in addition to the sailing-vessels which navigated the Kárún before this, to undertake the transport of goods on the river Kárún, from Muhammerah to the dyke at Ahwáz, on the condition, however, that they do not pass above the dyke at Ahwáz, for the navigation of the river from the dyke upwards is exclusively for sailing-vessels and steamers of the Persian governors or of Persian subjects."

There are other important conditions which seem to indicate that the shah is frightened at the momentous step that he has taken for his people's good; but at all events, the first step has been taken towards ensuring the reopening of this old route to the world's commerce. The next step to be urged towards "the extension of the commerce and the increase of the wealth of the empire, and the amelioration of the agriculture of Khuzistan," must be the extension of free navigation above the dyke to Shustar. Then to follow up the development of traffic it will be imperative to require from the Persian government security for the caravans through the hills *viâ* Khoramábád, and the improvement of the road above mentioned from Kúm. Even as it exists, it is the best and shortest route from the Gulf to Tihrán.

The reopening of the Ahwáz irrigation

channels for the fertilization of the plains of Arabistan, once famed for their sugar-plantations, and finally the construction of a line of railway from Shustar, and eventually from Muhammerah to Tihrán, are public works which will follow in due course of time.

To ensure the success of these enterprises, which, as I have indicated, should flow in the wake of the opening up of the Kárún River to navigation, if Great Britain and other European nations are to derive full benefit from them, it is essential that the local Persian nobility, gentry, and merchants be called upon to take a leading part both in initiating and bringing them to perfection. Such men exist not only in all the large towns of south-west Persia — *i.e.*, Shustar, Dizfúl, Khorámábád, Hamadán, Isfahán, Shíráz, and Bushíre — but also among the nomad Lurs of the Zagros and of mid-Persia. Many native capitalists from Tihrán, Tabriz, and other large towns of Persia, would greedily embark in such extended projects as sketched, should the Persian government foster it without guile — indeed a royal prince might place himself at the head of its directorate at once. Hitherto a sad fate has overtaken the few Persians who have interested themselves in the development of south-west Persia.

As soon as such a line as I propose is in working order, either as mule-track, cart or rail road, other radiating roads from Isfahán, Yazd, and Hamadán will not be long wanting; and these, as is well known, are the most fertile parts of Persia, exporting grain, wool, and luxuries like opium, tobacco, cotton, wine, fruits, etc. The importance of such a line to British commercial enterprise is incalculable.

With the political effect of the promulgation of the late Anglo-Persian treaty I do not propose to deal. Our one and sole aim is to enable Persia to take that position amongst the Eastern powers that her history, her industries, her tractable and skilful population, the fertility of her soil, and the variety of her agricultural and industrial products, entitle her to assume. Our object is her salvation, to be gained only by taking the bold course of opening up her country unreservedly to European enterprise. I here write as an imperial citizen, jealous of imperial interests, and in the maintenance of our commercial supremacy in the East. The splenetic declarations in the Russian press perhaps only indicate the official vexation felt at a

diplomatic triumph at Tihrán over Prince Dolgorouky; for the opening of the Kárún certainly exhibits to Persia the independent market which she possesses on the Gulf, and the advantages that must result to her by an increase of our competition with Russia in all Persian markets.

The mail-steamers in the Gulf and up the Tigris are favored with a postal subvention; and the enterprise of running English steam-vessels on the Kárún route will, it may be assumed, certainly be encouraged by a substantial subsidy from either the Indian or imperial governments, as some small return for the potential greatness of commercial results, and others, that must follow it. Great Britain can honestly, and without an ulterior thought, assist Persia, one of our imperial neighbors, whose fortunes are bound up with ours by the links of geographical position and its enforced common interests — links that none can unrevet, and which compel a brotherhood of nations otherwise widely separated.

Persia stands in need of population and means of locomotion, — wants that our empire can supply by her Indian subjects, and her moneyed merchants and manufacturers at home, who owe their wealth to the proud position we hold of chief carrier and supplier to the East — a position which, if my readers have the patience to follow me, I purpose to show is not an unassailable one, but rather one that will require of us, if we hope to retain it, both boldness of enterprise and sacrifices commensurate with the vast interests at stake.

Let us hope that ere long these plains and hills of Arabistan, Khuzistan, and Luristan will no more present the same unhappy conditions as when I passed through them; for the wand of commerce has already pointed in that direction, and, like Ithuriel's spear, is effecting a transformation of the scene; so that within a few years of contact with Western civilization, we may behold the nomads replaced by settled agriculturists, anarchy supplanted by law and order, whilst poverty gives way to wealth, and superstition to true faith.

*"And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field. . . . And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited."*

From The National Review.

#### THE SONNET IN AMERICA.

To our benefit, as well as to our credit, it is no longer the vogue with literary critics to speak slightly of American poetry. The time has gone by when the dilettante reviewer demanded, as Professor Richardson complains, that American poetry, if it was to exist at all, must be limited to pictures of the wharf, the prairie, and the gulch; to city directories and geographical indices, to axe-swinging pioneers and impromptu assassins.

A close study, however, of the last fifty years of Transatlantic poetic literature, certainly does not reveal a body of first-rate work comparable with that produced among ourselves, an assertion which may be set forth without implied disparagement of the great names so dear to thousands in this country as well as to millions in America. But what more nearly concerns us is the work of very recent and contemporary poets. The test of a poetic period is not that of the absolute or relative greatness of its most eminent exemplars, any more than the production of the largest and finest apple would be the test of the best orchard. How do the secondary poets of a period sing? What is the substance of their song? What are their limits? To what does their collective voicing tend? What degree of mental individuality and poetic originality do they possess and maintain? These are the questions which the student of literature has to consider before he can formulate any general opinion.

It is not to be gainsaid — as that acute and able critic, Mr. E. C. Stedman, admits — that there is "a lull in the force and efficacy of American song." Longfellow has ceased his clear and beautiful singing, and Bryant's stately measures seem to belong to an altogether bygone period. Poe, the most exaggeratedly praised and the most exaggeratedly condemned of all modern poets, long since threw away the lute of Israel on which he played so "wildly well." Emerson, potentially the greatest of American poets, rests beside a comrade to whom rhythmic metrical speech was still more emphatically denied, his friend Thoreau, who, like him, now slumbers deep in Sleepy Hollow. Bayard Taylor, so beloved, so full of high hope, and so pathetically foredoomed to a fame that must grow scantier with advancing years; he, too, is dead, and others of less repute though of singular promise. Sidney Lanier, the musician whom some caprice of nature thwarted of his birth-

right, and left him the blind desire to play with words as he would fain have played with notes and chords, gave him the pen instead of the viol, is gone; and Paul Hamilton Hayne, the impassioned but too impetuous, too regardlessly profuse singer of the South; with others still whose lips were anointed, in whatsoever measure, with honey from Hymettus. Of the more eminent singers, still happily in what one of them calls

This lonely sunlit ball that moves,  
And gleams for a little while 'twixt dark and dark,

one naturally recalls at once the veteran Whittier, whose sweetbrier song, however, is now seldom heard; Oliver Wendell Holmes, at once so quaint and so excellent, from whom the most exigent must no longer demand rivalries of past achievement; James Russell Lowell, vigorous, clear-eyed, clear-voiced, and now in the calm which follows rather than that which precedes high productiveness; Walt Whitman, stricken in years and health, but as serene as of yore, still alert to all the infinite possibilities of his own soul and of mankind in general, still oblivious to the irredeemable commonplace of so much of his barbaric chant; and Richard Henry Stoddard, master of the ode and most spontaneously lyrical of all who lilt 'twixt "Athenian Boston" and "Sunset City."

But if we compare the general body of our minor (or, to use a term that seems less weighted with the possibility of covert disparagement, our secondary) poets of the last decade or two with that of the contemporary minor singers of America, I certainly do not think it any foregone conclusion that acknowledgment of our superiority would be our due. It is not flattering, it is not pleasant, to note what a quantity of our relatively popular verse has been the merest trifling of an idle hour — ballads and rondeaux and triolets, which generally bear the same relation to poetry that flirtation does to passion.

It is, therefore, significant that in contemporary American verse, technically inferior to our own, as, in the main, it undoubtedly is, the *motives* of the Transatlantic poets are far oftener more wide, more strenuous, in a word, worthier. No wave of national sentiment but produces its shadow in the waters of verse; no heroic impulse, no calamity, no great national thrill that does not immediately find an echo in song, and not here or there, but from Louisiana to Maine, and

from Maine to the shores of Erie, from the Lakes to the Sierras, and from the remote mountains of the West to the Californian gulf. It is almost incredible to those who have not closely studied, and who do not continuously watch the course of American literary affairs, how electric the nation is, how quick to respond to the first spark of emotion. It is no doubt the case that there is not yet a sufficiently strenuous literary tradition in the United States; there is not yet that inherited, that magnetically inspired, that contagious passion for exquisiteness of utterance as well as for worthiness of motive, which is what every potent people sooner or later strains towards and achieves. But this will come in time; it is already, indeed, beginning to work like strong yeast, and the literary development of America promises to be exceptionally rapid and potent. Even, however, on the ground of actual comparison, there are among the more recent American poets one or two whose artistic care is as great, and whose touch is as light and dexterous as that of any writer of verse among ourselves, — Mr. T. B. Aldrich, for example, or, among still younger men, Mr. Richard Watson Gilder.

It would be easy of proof that the sonnet, more than any other poetic form, is that wherein the poets of our country have preferred to give utterance to their own and the general sentiment whenever some stirring incident or episode is rumored abroad, or whenever any conflict of opinion disturbs the general mental atmosphere. To judge by analogy, therefore, it would be expected that the poetic voice of America would be heard at its best in the sonnet. This, however, I am not at all prepared to assert; nor do I think that the most exact scrutiny would reveal the Transatlantic sonnet to be the true index to the poetic receptivity of public sentiment whether patriotic or intellectual. Why this should be so it is not easy to surmise, unless it be that the sonnet does not appear as naturally in a comparatively youthful as in a mature literature; though if this thesis be advanced, it has to be met by the awkward fact that the sonnet literature of America was almost as prolific as our own up to the last few years, and that now (not altogether with joy and thanksgiving must it be admitted) it is even more redundant. I have recently waded through considerably over two hundred volumes of American minor verse, by living or recently deceased authors, and have been amazed at the almost universal adoption of the sonnet, though of

proof of the actual culture of this species of verse, there is comparatively little. My sonnet search has convinced me, however, that a finer body of sonnets on general themes could be selected from the writings of the secondary poets of America than from those of our own minor bards.

In one important point there is no comparison. Whether from the circumstance that the rules of sonnet structure are not commonly apprehended in their true significance, or that they are found to be too exigent for writers who have not yet learned the great lesson that poetic speech must be golden, whatsoever the subject matter be, certain it is that an extraordinary structural looseness prevails. Among our own writers it is now only the amateur who is unaware of the conditions which govern the mould of a sonnet, who is ignorant of the three great types in which the form may be created, the Petrarchan or orthodox, the Shakespearian, and the Miltonic. It is now comparatively rare to find the names of poets of repute appended to a sonnet that is Petrarchan in all respects save a rhymed couplet at the close, to a Shakespearian sonnet that breaks the quatrains with related terminals, or to a Miltonic sonnet that has as many fundamental ideas as there are colors in a rainbow. But in America the sonnet goes forth in holiday. Oftenest it is content with casual divergencies, but too frequently it goes off on a rampage of its own, and sometimes it returns so disguised as hardly to be recognizable. The poet — one almost unread in this country, and very little known in America — who had the potentiality of becoming one of the greatest sonnet-writers on either side of the Atlantic, was among the worst offenders in this respect; for there are several remarkably noteworthy poems in this form by the late Charles Heavyside (a Canadian, however, it should be observed), which are neither more nor less than sets of seven rhymed couplets. Undoubtedly the primary need of a sonnet is adequacy of motive, absolute adequacy, in so far that the reader should feel that the matter could not have been said in less, and would be spoilt by further enlargement of space; in a word, that no other poetic form would be so apt. In this sense, accordingly, a poem which consists of seven rhymed couplets may be much more truly a sonnet than one which is thoroughly orthodox in structure, but is merely an ordinary descriptive poem, which might as well have been expressed in twelve or



in fifteen lines. But the not least peculiar charm of this species of verse is the pleasurable anticipation of prescribed harmonies. A glance betrays whether an example be after the Petrarchan or Shakespearian model in what may be termed its general contours, and to the sensitive reader there is a very unpleasant jar when some bastard form confuses the expected with the actual rhyme harmonies. To write, therefore, in a formless sonnet is to defraud the reader of a metrical music, the enjoyment of which had been with him a foregone conclusion. Yet no one could read such a poem as the following, by Heavysege, without realizing that, formless and even inartistic as it is, it is potentially a fine sonnet:—

## ANNIHILATION.

Up from the deep Annihilation came  
And shook the shore of nature with his frame;  
Vulcan, nor Polyphemus of one eye,  
For size or strength could with the monster vie;  
Who, landed, round his sullen eyeballs rolled,  
While dripped the ooze from limbs of mighty mould.

But who the bard that shall in song express  
(For he was clad) the more than Anarch's dress?

All round about him hanging were decays  
And ever-dropping remnants of the past;  
But how shall I recite my great amaze  
As down the abyss I saw him coolly cast  
Slowly, but constantly, some lofty name  
Men thought secure in bright, eternal fame.

In "The Dead," another potentially noble sonnet, there is manifest a kind of blind groping after propriety of form:—

How great unto the living seem the dead!  
How sacred, solemn; how heroic grown;  
How vast and vague, as they obscurely tread  
The shadowy confines of the dim unknown!  
For they have met the monster that we dread,  
Have learned the secret not to mortal shown.  
E'en as gigantic shadows on the wall  
The spirit of the daunted child amaze,  
So on us thoughts of the departed fall,  
And with phantasma fill our gloomy gaze.  
Awe and deep wonder lend the living lines,  
And hope and ecstasy the borrowed beams,  
While fitful fancy the full form divines,  
And all is what imagination dreams.

In his later examples Heavysege actually arrived at the correct Shakespearian form, though even in his powerful "Night"—the sonnet that contains the lovely quatrain,—

Oh, Night, art thou so grim, when, black and bare  
Of moonbeams, and no cloudlets to adorn,  
Like a nude Ethiop 'twixt two houris fair  
Thou stand'st between the Evening and the Morn—

he confuses the rhyming terminals of the second and third quatrains. It is curious, indeed, to note how very small in quantity are the Shakespearian sonnets—the form that can be sweetest, most resonant, most impressive, when the favorite metrical medium of a true poet. There is, of course, one famous example, that of Edgar Allan Poe's "Science" (his "Zante" might also be quoted)—for the superb invocation to "Silence" is, structurally, as much a mongrel as any so-called sonnet by Heavysege. Bryant also wrote some Shakespearian forms, and among more recent exemplars may be mentioned Sidney Lanier and James Herbert Morse.

I have before me a manuscript collection of some three hundred selected American sonnets, and from this and other sources I infer that fully half of contemporary sonnets "over sea" are in the Petrarchan or orthodox mould of a two-rhymed octave and two tercets (or three interwoven couplets), while it is almost certain that at least eight-tenths of the best sonnets are so constructed.

Foremost among American sonneteers stands Longfellow, the only member of the supreme group who uses this form with ease and dignity. Some score of examples—including the beautiful "Divina Commedia" series—might be selected from his works and compared with twenty by any modern English poet save Wordsworth, nor lose thereby for nobility of sentiment and graciousness of diction. Wordsworth himself might have been proud to include "Nature," for instance, among his finest poems of this kind. As to the very difficult and delicate decision concerning those who should next be mentioned, a foreign critic is not so disadvantageously placed as if he were the butterfly in the hornet's nest. Still, it is no easy matter even to give expression to a definite personal opinion. Let me first mention some names alphabetically, so that the genius of nomenclature and not the present chronicler may be held responsible. Foremost, then, one thinks of Aldrich, that dainty lyricist, who has written some notable sonnets, among them one which is of special appeal to us who are but foreigners in name:—

## TO ENGLAND.

While men pay reverence to mighty things  
They must revere thee, thou blue-cinctured isle  
Of England—not to-day, but this long while  
In front of nations, Mother of Great Kings,

Soldiers, and poets. Round thee the sea  
 flings  
 His steel-bright arm, and shields thee from  
 the guile  
 And hurt of France. Secure, with august  
 smile,  
 Thou sittest, and the East its tribute brings.  
 Some say thy old-time power is on the wane,  
 Thy moon of grandeur filled, contracts at  
 length—  
 They see it darkening down from less to  
 less:  
 Let but a hostile hand make threat again,  
 And they shall see thee in thy ancient  
 strength,  
 Each iron sinew quivering, lioness!

"Egypt," "Miracles," "Fredericks-  
 burg," "Pursuit and Possession," and  
 "Enamored Architect of Airy Rhyme,"  
 are among the finest of Mr. Aldrich's  
 sonnets. Bryant has already been alluded  
 to; and thereafter come, head and shoul-  
 ders above a crowd of sweet but minor  
 singers, Edgar Fawcett, R. W. Gilder,  
 and Helen Hunt Jackson—for O. W.  
 Holmes, though he has written one or  
 two sonnets, is no sonneteer. Edgar  
 Fawcett seems to me to have written the  
 most weighty sonnets after Longfellow's;  
 but when I come to select one I am per-  
 turbed by memory of half-a-dozen special  
 favorites. For breadth of vision "Other  
 Worlds" is very noteworthy.

I sometimes muse, when my adventurous gaze  
 Has roamed the starry arches of the night,  
 That were I dowered with strong angelic  
 sight  
 All would look changed in those pale heavenly  
 ways.  
 What wheeling worlds my vision would amaze!  
 What chasms of gloom would thrill me and  
 affright!  
 What rhythmic equipoise would rouse de-  
 light!  
 What moons would beam on me, what suns  
 would blaze!  
 Then through my awed soul sweeps the larger  
 thought  
 Of how creation's edict may have set  
 Vast human multitudes on those far  
 spheres  
 With towering passions to which mine mean  
 naught,  
 With majesties of happiness, or yet  
 With agonies of unconjectured tears.

A large and noble utterance charac-  
 terizes all the really fine work of Mr.  
 Fawcett, and did space permit I should  
 gladly quote the sombre "Suicide," or  
 "Earthquake," "Sleep's Threshold," or  
 "Commonplaces," inspired by "the dark,  
 ubiquitous commonplace of death." Mr.  
 R. W. Gilder's sonnets also are generally  
 masterly, and he has succeeded, moreover,

in writing a good new "Sonnet on the  
 Sonnet"—a curiously ineffective task,  
 which at least a score of writers, from  
 Wordsworth and Rossetti downwards,  
 have set themselves to accomplish. None  
 will ever equal Wordsworth's familiar  
 prototype; all others are mere playing with  
 the wind, excellent though they may be.  
 Among the best of Mr. Gilder's sonnets  
 are one or two already familiar to students  
 of contemporary poetry, "Day unto Day  
 Uttereth Speech" and "My Love for  
 Thee doth March like Armed Men" in  
 particular, while in "The Life-Mask of  
 Abraham Lincoln" he has touched a very  
 high note indeed:—

This bronze doth keep the very form and  
 mould  
 Of our great martyr's face. Yes, this is he:  
 That brow all wisdom, all benignity;  
 That human, humorous mouth; those cheeks  
 that hold  
 Like some harsh landscape all the summer's  
 gold;  
 That spirit fit for sorrow, as the sea  
 For storms to beat on; the lone agony  
 Those silent, patient lips too well foretold.  
 Yes, this is he who ruled a world of men  
 As might some prophet of the elder day—  
 Brooding above the tempest and the fray  
 With deep-eyed thought and more than mor-  
 tal ken.

A power was his beyond the touch of art  
 Or armed strength: his pure and mighty  
 heart.

"H. H." were longwhile familiar and  
 welcome initials with the Transatlantic  
 reading public, and both as a woman and  
 a writer Mrs. Helen Hunt Jackson exer-  
 cised a widespread and beneficent influ-  
 ence. Her "Freedom" is an especially  
 noble sonnet, though its rhythmic strength  
 unfortunately flags somewhat in the last  
 line. The greatest charm of her work,  
 both in prose and verse, is her keen sense  
 of color. For flowers she had what could  
 not be called other than a passion, and  
 her friends have delighted in recalling  
 her eagerness and joy over every bloom  
 and blossom in the neighborhood of her  
 home, near Cheyenne Mountain, in Colo-  
 rado. In personality she was the most  
 poetic of poets, and in her love of physical  
 beauty more "Greek than the Greeks."  
 It is probable that no woman of her time  
 exercised such a sway over the admira-  
 tion and sympathies of the younger Ameri-  
 can writers. Her "Ramona" is a prose  
 idyl which deserves a place among the  
 memorable works of imaginative fiction.  
 Much of Mrs. Jackson's poetry, however,  
 is void of its subtlest charm to those who  
 never met her; it has the common fault of

Transatlantic verse, a too nervous facility, a diffuseness which palls rather than attracts. When, a few years hence, some sympathetic but sternly critical hand shall give us a selection of all that is best in the writings of "H. H.," her name will rest on a surer basis.

James Kenyon, Professor Henry Beers, Owen Innsley, and the late Emma Lazarus are all noteworthy sonneteers, and the latter has the distinction of being the foremost latter-day poet of Israel. Her poetry has a singular loftiness and, if the seeming paradox be permitted, a passionate serenity, which distinguish it from the great bulk of contemporary minor verse. It is by such lyrics as "The Banner of the Jew" that she will, no doubt, be longest remembered, but her poetic dramas, particularly "The Dance to Death," are noteworthy in the best sense. Perhaps to the majority of readers she appeals most by her renderings from the mediæval Hebrew poets of Spain, Gabirol, Jehudah ben Halevi, Moses ben Esra; from Petrarch and Dante; from Heine and A. de Musset. For translation she had a faculty scarce short of genius. Miss Lazarus is not always at her ease in the sonnet, but her "Success," "Venus of the Louvre," and "Love's Protagonist" are fine examples of this form.

Mr. Kenyon's second volume, "In Realms of Gold," attracted much favorable attention when it was published two years ago, and as a sonneteer he is certainly without more than two or three serious rivals. His "Shakespeare sonnets," "Romeo to Juliet" and "Cleopatra to Antony," have been much admired, though I think his two strongest are the sombre "Rizpah" and "The Traveller."

There are one or two Canadian poets whose verse has mainly appeared in United States magazines, and who, apart from any accident of birth or place, are distinctively American. Foremost among these northern singers are Charles G. D. Roberts and Archibald Lampman. The former is admittedly at the head of younger Canadian poets, and his "In Divers Tones" and other volumes have gained attention here as well as over sea. Among his best sonnets are two which have been widely circulated in this country, "The Potato Harvest" and "The Sower," studies in impressionistic realism which show that the sonnet can have the simple directness of the ordinary quatrain, or rhymed heroics. Mr. Lampman would seem to be to Canada what Maurice Thompson and Miss Edith Thomas are to the States, the

foremost younger poet-chronicler of nature. His "Among the Millet" is a pleasant volume; but that he can convey the human as well as the merely naturalistic sentiment is evident in the following sonnet, which is all the more noteworthy as it deals with a theme that poets have generally shirked, as though the shriek of the steam-engine were the direst sound the Muse could hear:—

#### THE RAILWAY STATION.

The darkness brings no quiet here, the light  
No waking: ever on my blinded brain  
The flare of lights, the rush, and cry, and  
    strain,  
The engine's scream, the hiss and thunder,  
    smite;  
I see the hurrying crowds, the clasp, the flight,  
    Faces that touch, eyes that are dim with  
    pain:  
I see the hoarse wheels turn, and the great  
    train  
Move laboring out into the boundless night.  
So many souls within its dim recesses,  
    So many bright, so many mournful eyes;  
Mine eyes that watch grow fixed with dreams  
    and guesses;  
What threads of life, what hidden histories,  
What sweet or passionate dreams and dark  
    distresses,  
What unknown thoughts, what various agonies!

When I spoke of "H. H." and Miss Emma Lazarus, I should also have alluded to another sonneteer of the same sex, than whom few occupy a more established position; indeed, as far as recognition in this country goes, few American writers are more fortunate than Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton. Mrs. Moulton is very nearly alone in her solicitous culture of the sonnet out of sheer love and preference for it among all metrical forms. The following is fairly representative:—

#### A CRY.

O wanderer in unknown lands, what cheer?  
How dost thou fare on thy mysterious way?  
What strange light breaks upon thy distant  
    day  
Yet leaves me lonely in the darkness here?  
O hide no longer in that far-off sphere,  
Though all Heaven's cohorts should thy  
    footsteps stay;  
Break through their splendid, militant array,  
And answer to my call, O dead and dear!  
I shall not fear thee, howsoever thou come:  
Thy coldness will not chill, though Death  
    is cold—  
A touch and I shall know thee, or a  
    breath;  
Speak the old well-known language, or be  
    dumb;  
Only come back! Be near me as of old,  
So thou and I shall triumph over Death!

The number of women poets of worth in America is significant of the widespread literary culture and literary instinct which more than one eminent observer has recently noted. Besides those already alluded to, who are at the same time sonnet-writers, mention should be made of Helen Gray Cone, Mrs. Julia C. Dorr, Anne Lynch, Mrs. L. C. Perry, Mrs. Margaret Preston, Miss S. M. Spalding, Celia Thaxter, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, and Mrs. Piatt—though the last-named, in common with Miss Alice and Miss Phœbe Cary, and other popular writers of verse, have not distinguished themselves in the sonnet.

It is no disparagement to so fine a poet as Mr. Lowell to remark that he has not published any noteworthy sonnet, though several that are much above the average level. The form does not suit him; and even at his best therein he rides his Pegasus somewhat cumbrously. The late John Godfrey Saxe claimed to have written one of the finest sonnets in the language. I have carefully read all his few poems in this form, and conclude that that particular sonnet has in some extraordinary fashion been omitted from the copy of the "Poetical Works" in my possession. Among other "S's," mention should be made of Edmund Clarence Stedman, *facile princeps* among American literary critics; of the versatile Clinton Scollard; of W. W. Story, better known, perhaps, as a sculptor than as a poet; and of Frank Dempster Sherman. Bayard Taylor's genius was much too impulsively lyrical to afford him mastery in the sonnet, and Whittier's too spontaneous and unconscious. Among others of some standing I may mention finally Stephen H. Thayer; that strange and religious enthusiast Jones Very (which once, in my ignorance, I took to be a humorous pseudonym—as I find others have done), Professor Henry Beers, and Edith M. Thomas, to whom, however, allusion has already been made.

The American poet of recent date, at once most overpraised and underrated, is the late Sidney Lanier. "Lanier is the nightingale of Baltimore," remarked an enthusiastic critic some time ago. "Possibly," was the unfeeling retort, "but in that case Baltimore must be hard up for dicky-birds." Lanier was indubitably a lyrical poet of quite exceptional faculty, though affectation and strained effect spoil much of his verse; but here we have to do with him simply as a sonneteer. Why he wrote sonnets at all is a mystery, for he has no inevitable bias that way; on

the contrary, his mannerisms become much more obvious and distracting. Yet his sonnets have many admirers even among critics, and undoubtedly even when most obviously "manipulated" have still a certain quality of saving grace. "The Harlequin of Dreams," the series entitled "In Absence," and the two comprised in "Acknowledgment," are his best; in the latter there is an exuberance, an exaggeration of address which is strongly suggestive of the diction of the lesser Elizabethans. "Laus Mariæ" is accepted by many as his best sonnet. Yet, interesting as it is in some respects, one cannot but wonder at the critical blindness of those who call Lanier the American Keats.

## LAUS MARIÆ.

Across the brook of Time man leaping goes  
On stepping-stones of epochs, that uprise  
Fixed, memorable, 'midst broad shallow flows  
Of neutrals, kill-times, sleeps, indifferencies.  
So mixt each morn and night rise salient  
heaps;  
Some cross with but a zigzag jaded pace  
From meal to meal; some with convulsive  
leaps  
Shake the green tussocks of malign disgrace:  
And some advance by system and deep art  
O'er vantages of wealth, place, learning,  
tact;  
But thou within thyself, dear manifold heart,  
Dost bind all epochs in one dainty Fact.  
Oh, sweet, my pretty sum of history,  
I leapt the breadth of Time in loving thee!

There is one ominously suggestive circumstance for which I should like some skilled reader of riddles to account. What is the reason that *every* American poet who writes sonnets has addressed one to, or composed one upon, sleep? I shudder to think of the "sleeps"—good, bad, and indifferent—which I have vicariously enjoyed. Why this persistent hymning of slumber? Is it after much sonnet-writing, or reading? Is it in prophetic vision of the effect upon stolid Britons of a course of American poetry? I would fain know; but meanwhile I am willing to adventure upon the most extravagant wager that the American sonneteer who has not apostrophized or celebrated sleep has not yet been born.

Many readers will recall Wordsworth's beautiful sleep-sonnet. While it would be difficult indeed to match this among the whole American legion there is one, at least, that deserves to be singled out, and with it I may conclude.

## SLEEP.

(By Edgar Fawcett.)

A yellow sunset, soft and dreamy of dye,  
 Met sharply by black fluctuant lines of  
 grass;  
 A river, glimmering like illumined glass,  
 And narrowing till it ends in distant sky;  
 Pale scattered pools of luminous rain, that lie  
 In shadowy amplitudes of green morass;  
 A crescent that the old moon, as moments  
 pass,  
 Has turned to a silver acorn hung on high!  
 Now through this melancholy and silent land,  
 Sleep walks, diaphanous-vestured, vaguely  
 fair;  
 Within her vaporous robe and one dim hand  
 Much asphodel and lotus doth she bear,  
 Going lovely and low-lidded, with a band  
 Of dull-red poppies amid her dull-gold hair!

WILLIAM SHARP.

From Time.

LAURENCE OLIPHANT.

BY OSWALD SMITH.

THE recent and unexpected death of Laurence Oliphant has caused such widely spread regret, not only among the large number of his friends and acquaintances, but also among those who knew him only as a brilliant and fascinating writer, with a reputation for holding somewhat mystical religious views, that it has been thought that some reminiscences of him by one who knew him when little more than a boy, who was fortunate enough to be his companion during a somewhat adventurous journey in days long gone by, and who remained on terms of affectionate intimacy with him for more than thirty-five years, would not be without interest to the general public.

Be that as it may, I have been asked to write a few pages about Laurence Oliphant, and my companionship with him; and I have agreed to do so, in the hope that perhaps some particulars in what I have to say may tend to give, to those who had no personal acquaintance with him, some idea of what my friend was like, especially in his earlier years; and it may be added that it is a labor of love to recall the association with one of the most attractive companions that it is possible to imagine.

We first became friends in the early part of 1852. A near relative of my own had been most intimate with Sir Anthony and Lady Oliphant in Ceylon; and when Sir Anthony, on his retirement from pub-

lic life, returned to England, his son Laurence, thus introduced, came as a frequent visitor to my father's house in Kent.

He was then about twenty-three years old, and was full of the energy and spirits which distinguished him through life. I find an entry in my diary of that year: "L.O. most popular, and a very nice fellow." His dash and pluck were even then exceptional, and as an instance of this it may be recorded how, either that year or soon after, he came down when skating was the amusement of the hour. Naturally, as Oliphant had up to that time spent most of his boyhood in Ceylon, he had all to learn; but, notwithstanding this, at the end of two days he was a better and bolder skater than any of the party; and I can well remember the admiration which his almost reckless audacity on the ice caused — crowned as it was by complete success. I can recall his figure very vividly now as he dashed rapidly "on the outside edge backward" with peal upon peal of his delightful laughter — the gayest of the gay.

Oliphant paid us frequent visits that summer, and we formed a plan of taking a holiday together in the early autumn; and a sporting tour to north Russia and Sweden commended itself to both of us. We started early in August, 1852, and, as is recorded in Oliphant's book, "The Russian Shores of the Black Sea," our destination was entirely altered by circumstances. I believe that the abandonment of the projected journey to the White Sea, in search of salmon and bears, was a fortunate thing for both of us. I certainly was quite inexperienced in such matters. I had bought a Minié rifle, and had practised at a target, with the most harmless results to the target. Oliphant, although I believe he had shot a tiger or two with Jung Bahadoor, in Nepaul, was not a much better sportsman than myself; and I can only consider our change of plan providential — especially as it led us to a spot which within two years was to be the scene of a warfare unequalled in interest and magnitude since 1815.

Various causes effected the change of plan above alluded to, but I believe the main one was, that we found on arriving at St. Petersburg we were too late in the year to go north with any chance of being repaid by sport. Oliphant had already been a traveller, and had published his Nepaul excursion; he was bitten by the literary success he had had; and, although I did not realize it at the time, doubtless he had a book in view when we started, and did



not care much in which direction our steps were bent, so long as he could get good materials for his projected work.

We had been furnished with letters to Sir Hamilton Seymour, the British ambassador to the Russian court; from him we received kind hospitality. Little did we realize that at that very time he was holding those interviews with the czar Nicholas relative to the "Sick Man" and Turkish affairs, which were so faithfully remembered, and caused such a sensation, when published later, on the outbreak of war between Russia and England.

The most noteworthy incident of our stay at St. Petersburg was a visit to the camp of Krasno Selo, where the autumn manœuvres were in progress; we there saw ninety thousand men under arms. At that time this was considered a very large number, though it fades into insignificance if compared with the enormous forces of the present day. The figure of the gigantic Nicholas on his white charger was very conspicuous; he looked as if he might live forever, truly a "divine figure of the North." Within three years, however, he was dead of disappointment and grief.

A dinner at the so-called English Club may also be mentioned. It was a curious scene; the company was almost entirely composed of very tightly-belted, heavily-epauletted Russian officers in uniform — whose beverage at dinner was "half-and-half," viz., London porter and champagne, mixed in equal proportions, and whose post-prandial amusement was "skittles" in its most rudimentary form.

Bound for the renowned fair of Nijni Novgorod, we started by rail to Moscow; that in itself was an event in those days; the railroad, the first made in Russia, had only been a few months completed. There was only one train in twenty-four hours, and crowds assembled to see it start, as a sight.

At Moscow the usual visits to the Kremlin and other objects of interest were duly paid, and, after a few days' stay, we went on by coach to Nijni. This was an affair of forty-eight hours, and only presented the ordinary incidents of delays from bad roads, mud, etc. We were both disappointed by the great fair, about which we had heard so much. Costumes were conspicuous by their absence, and we were not sorry to embark on a tug steamer on the broad Volga on our way south. Ignorant as we both were of the Russian language, we had endeavored to engage a travelling-servant, but without success;

and we looked forward with something like apprehension to the difficulties that might arise, when we found ourselves quite in the wilds. It may give some idea of Oliphant's sanguine and imaginative character to record that his plan for future proceedings was to disembark on the right bank of the Volga at Tsaritsin, not far from Astracan, to engage horses there and gallop over the "Don Cossack Steppe," four hundred miles, to Taganrog on the Azov Sea. This seemed a most delightful plan, but (to me) a little visionary, as indeed was soon proved.

Our voyage down the Volga lasted nearly three weeks, and, though tedious, was an interesting experience; either we or some of the barges we towed were often aground on the shifting river sand-banks, and thus we encountered frequent delays. We had periodical stoppages to take in our timber fuel; and I can still recall the picturesque night scenes, when, by the light of bonfires, hundreds of peasants, male and female, mustered on the banks, and carried logs of wood on board with indescribable noise and turmoil.

Kazan, as Oriental in aspect as Moscow, possessing also a fine Kremlin, and the picturesquely wooded banks of the Volga, north of Samara, were the chief points of interest in our river voyage; although the grandeur of the stream itself, which from its great breadth was often more like a lake than a river, was ever an object of admiration to us.

We left the Volga at Doubovka; and here Oliphant was taken very ill, and I believe his career had a narrow escape of coming to an untimely end. With his usual pluck, however, he fought through it, and by means of a little Latin we managed to procure the necessary medicines from the local chemist. But no horses were to be had, and the plan of riding across the Steppe was proved to be entirely impracticable; in fact, the situation was as described in the following doggerel from a contemporary poem:—

And once more embarking on Volga's broad stream,  
I'll talk over with Oliphant scheme after scheme:  
How we will descend to far-famed Astracan,  
And thence gallop over the Steppe, if we can;  
Again I'll condole with that same Oliphant  
When, on making enquiry, we find that we can't.

The alternative of the visionary Cossack horses was a tumbledown old tarantass, a sort of open carriage, with shaky wheels, which required much patching up

*en route.* This we had to purchase, and to face the project of posting the long distance to Taganrog. The journey was accomplished in four or five days, traveling day and night, and with but few delays or obstacles, the weather being exceptionally favorable. In rainy weather, and the sea of mud produced by it, the *trajet* would have been most difficult, as the numerous ravines and watercourses were not bridged; and it was necessary many times daily to descend into them, and mount the opposite side. During the whole of this tedious journey I can well remember the unvarying high spirits of my companion; he was never discouraged by stoppage or delay, and was continually bursting forth into snatches of song. Once, however, the *yamtchik*, or driver, upset Oliphant's usual good-humor — I forget in what way, — and the consequence was that a revolver was directly held to the unfortunate man's head; a very harmless proceeding in reality, as the weapon was not loaded, nor had he, I think, any ammunition for it. Many a pleasant tea we had together when the bright samovar was brought to us at the posting-houses; and that delicious beverage was brewed, which, mahogany in color, with its slice of lemon floating on it, and drunk out of glasses, looks to many as it did to me, when I first saw it on the Baltic steamer, like a tumbler of hot punch. It is, however, most excellent, and recuperative in its effects, and morning, noon, and night was it welcomed by us.

After our arrival at Taganrog, Mr. Carruthers, the British consul there, from whom we received much kindness, assured us that we were not only fortunate in having accomplished our journey with so little delay, but that, ignorant as we were of the language, we were lucky to have arrived at all.

The next experience was, a few days' voyage across the shallow waters of the Azov Sea in a sailing vessel (where our only food was coffee, excellent caviare, and biscuits), whose speed averaged only about four miles an hour. Thus we were brought to Kertch, a town destined within two years from that time to be the scene of warlike operations between Russia and the allied fleets of France and England.

Arrived in the Crimea, of course our principal object was to visit Sebastopol, which had then a sort of mysterious reputation, as the point whence Russia was threatening Turkey; and to see the Black Sea fleet. The czar was daily expected, and there was talk of a naval review. We

were told that no strangers were allowed to enter the town, or to see the fleet; it need hardly be added that this alleged prohibition at once decided Oliphant to go there at all hazards; and, as a matter of fact, no opposition or difficulty whatever was encountered in the undertaking.

From Kertch we made an interesting *détour* by Simferopol, whence we ascended the Tchatir-Dagh, the highest point of the Crimean mountains, to Aloushta; and thence we drove along the southern coast by Yalta to Sebastopol. The road was high above the waters of the Black Sea, and rivalled the Italian Cornice in beauties of scenery. Leaving Balaclava, which, two years later, was crowded with European fleets, to the left, we drove straight into Sebastopol; saw the much-vaunted fleet, destined not long after to sink beneath the very waves on which it was then so proudly riding; and admired the unrivalled harbor.

Thence our journey took us to the old Tartar capital, Bagtche-Serai, which at that time was, and probably is now, entirely Oriental in its character and customs. Our stay there, and the excursions to the deserted Jewish village, Tchufut-Kale, and burying-ground in its neighborhood, and elsewhere, are fully described in Oliphant's book, "The Russian Shores," and I will only say here that we should have been well repaid for our long journey and fatigues, had we beheld nothing else than the most interesting and completely Oriental scenes, which we explored in the centre of the Crimea.

A long ride, through forests and over mountains, brought us back to Yalta, whence we went by steamer to Odessa. Our homeward route was up the Danube. The vessels then gave miserable accommodation, hence much complaining was heard among the passengers; of these malcontents Oliphant was of course the ringleader, and he was much pleased and excited by a kind of semi-arrest to which he was subjected at one of our stopping-places. We had to hurry back, *via* Vienna and Germany, in order to save the commencement of term, for Oliphant was then reading for the Scotch bar.

The interest of this tour was greatly increased by subsequent events, and when the invasion of the Crimea was projected in the spring of 1854, the only Englishmen that could be found who had visited Sebastopol were Oliphant and his companion. Ourselves, our journals and sketches, were all summoned to the War Office, and Lord de Ros and Colonel Matson picked

our brains as well as they could. "Sebastopol has no land defences in the south," — that was the burden of our song; and it is now generally admitted that an assault might have been made on that side directly on arriving there, after the flank march, at the end of September, 1854, before Todleben had begun his system of earthworks. It is, however, very doubtful whether the long siege, protracted as it was for so many months, did not weaken Russia more than the immediate capture of her Black Sea stronghold would have done. The siege, to repel which men and stores and guns had to be supplied without the help of railways, at that vast distance from headquarters, was like a sore in a man's heel, and must have drained the body politic of its very life-blood.

The success of Oliphant's published account of the tour, of which a short *résumé* has been given above, was undeniable; and, doubtless, stimulated him to further adventures and literary efforts. His delight was as much in his pen as in active employment, and he told me, more than once, that he was never so happy as when he was writing.

He read, as I have said, for the Scotch bar; and during some years we only met after long intervals — indeed, we never lived together again; but when we did meet it was always on the most cordial and affectionate terms. I saw him on his return from Japan; he then thought he should never recover the use of his injured arm, but a year afterwards all bad effects had disappeared.

One of the most interesting periods of Oliphant's life was that of the Franco-German war. We were sitting together in the shade of an oak-tree in a country park, on a lovely day in early July, 1870, when the paper containing the news of the first guns fired in that bloody war was handed to him. "So the devil has entered into them," said he. There was, of course, no keeping him in a quiet "country park" after this. Ere long we heard of him in the thick of the battles, and surely nothing more original was ever imagined than his way of performing his duties as war correspondent. His own words to me were: "I hired a fly, drove in front of the German armies a few miles ahead, and when there was to be a fight, I went up the nearest church tower and watched it."

As the mystic element in Oliphant's mind gradually prevailed over all others and was pre-eminent during the latter years of his life, it may not be uninteresting to record that, during his Russian

journey, I do not remember his showing any tendency of that nature, either in character or conversation. To the best of my belief it first showed itself after the death of his father; this took place very suddenly. Oliphant was deeply attached to Sir Anthony, who was a man of keen intellect and strong common sense. He was devoted to his brilliant son, and quite recognized his ability; but, I have been told, was a little uneasy at his so-called "flightiness." There was the strongest mutual affection between the two; and Oliphant told me that, after his father's death, his most earnest efforts were directed towards discovering a mode of communication between his father in the world of spirits and himself, and that he had utterly failed in the attempt. I remember also going with him to the *stances* of a then fashionable American medium (I think Hayden was her name), where the ordinary rapping and spelling out replies were exhibited; the success was limited, and the details, which I could give, are not worth recording. Oliphant did not seem much impressed by them. Nor do I think that he long dallied with this kind of manifestations; indeed, he said that he soon passed beyond them, and warned others against them. He believed himself to be in personal communication with a much higher power, as is signified by his lines from "Sympneumata": —

When he by effort of his own,  
The painful pilgrimage has trod,  
At last he finds himself alone  
With Nature, and with Nature's God.

So little advanced was he then (1854) in such matters, that I remember his mesmerizing a young lady at an evening party; and, the usual effects having been produced, his being utterly unable to release her from the influence which he had obtained over her. The scene was rather painful, both to himself, and others who were present.

In later years, when brought into contact, we both rather avoided such subjects; he professed, to others, to wish to leave me and mine in what he called "the happiness of our belief;" whilst I must say, in agreement with what others have lately written on this subject, that I could but dimly understand his explanation, when occasionally given, of his own discoveries. Discoveries, I advisedly say; for he used to say that by the discipline he had undergone, he had discovered a secret which would put an end to sin and

its consequences, to sorrow, and even death itself.

Some four or five years ago he was staying with me, and I begged him not to delay the publication of this secret. "You may die," I said, "without disclosing it—we are all getting old." His reply was, "I am not so sure that I shall die at all."

And it was not far otherwise when I saw him on his bed of sickness late in 1888, at the house of his kind friend Mrs. Walker, where he had been taken ill. Though pronounced by his doctor to be suffering under a mortal disease, he refused to admit this. His wonderful pluck and energy, combined, I suppose, with the feeling that he had yet work to do, seemed almost to keep him alive. He said he had "life poured into him" by the contact of the hands of his newly-wedded wife, who nursed him with great devotion; and that doctors were as ignorant of the means of sustaining and prolonging life, as they confessedly were of the nature and constitution of life itself.

It is pleasant to think of Oliphant after his restless, and, it may be almost said, homeless life, passing, towards its close, a few happy years in a home of his own at Haifa, a place whose perfect repose and lovely climate must have been very soothing and refreshing to him. He had obtained considerable influence over the inhabitants, and, indeed, had established almost a patriarchal despotism. Some near relatives of my own were kindly received by him there in March, 1887, and their account of the visit is very interesting. Rides and drives in the vicinity of Mount Carmel, visits to the neighboring ruins, fishing in the Kishon, and shooting along the banks of that stream, were the pleasures that Oliphant provided. These, combined with the kindest and ablest arrangements for their further progress to Damascus and Baalbec, sent my friends away full of gratitude to the recluse of Haifa, whose ever cheery companionship had made their stay so agreeable. Many friends visited him at Haifa, among others Gordon, shortly before his last journey to Khartoum; and Oliphant's words to me, in telling me of this visit, were, "People would have been amused to have seen us two illustrious maniacs conferring together." At Haifa, of course, as elsewhere, his principal occupation was his pen. I had always urged him to write his life as the most interesting subject he could treat of, with its wonderful changes of scene and employment, so full

of excitement and variety; evenings *tête-à-tête* with Lord Palmerston at Broadlands, of which I know there were many; companionship with Omar Pasha and Garibaldi; conversations with Bismarck; what could be more attractive?—to say nothing of the "hidden years" in America, of which the details will now probably never be known. I had it in his own writing that the outcome of this suggestion was the papers on "Moss from a Rolling Stone," published in *Blackwood*, and, I think, afterwards collected in "Episodes of a Life of Adventure." Then came the two mystic works, "Sympleumata" and "Scientific Religion," which were the last products of his pen; in which he said he gave to the public the best he had to give, and the last; and so indeed it was.

Looking back upon Laurence Oliphant, and what may be termed my somewhat spasmodic intercourse with him, I would rather recollect him as one of the most unworldly, guileless, and attractive men I have ever known, than as the brilliant author, traveller, and adventurer. Of course I use this last word in its best sense.

Had he stuck to the Scotch bar in 1853, or, later on, to the British Parliament, he might no doubt have risen to eminence in either, or both; but he was essentially an excitable man, fond of amusement, very impulsive, and averse to any restraint. He must go wherever the interest of the moment lay—must see the hero of the hour; and so it was, that he became the stormy petrel of political events; where there was turmoil, revolution, excitement, there was Oliphant to be found. He had ample opportunities and special means of making money at many periods of his life—especially during one of his residences in America—but he utterly despised and was careless of such things.

He once wrote to me at great length on some large financial operation, the carrying out of which would not have put one penny into his pocket; but the excitement and interest attendant on it were quite enough for him. Another of his projects, which would have been equally unprofitable to him personally, but which, from its strangeness, he was at one time keen about, was a proposed publication of the *Times* simultaneously in French and English at Paris and London. I told him that I thought the English residents in Paris would much prefer their long-lived Galignani. His idea did not find favor at headquarters.

There never was a man so indifferent about money. One anecdote will give some proof of this. He came one day to a bank in London, and asked for a box that he had long ago deposited there, and which he believed to contain valuable securities and important papers. The box was brought; he had no key, and there was none in the possession of the custodians of the box. It was therefore broken open. What were the contents? A battered old meerschaum pipe and nothing more. And what were the results of this discovery on Oliphant? Not any expression of disappointment or regret, but peal upon peal of that delightful and infectious laughter, which all who knew him will ever connect with the personality of Laurence Oliphant.

He was ever welcome at that bank, not only to the writer of these lines, but to all those there whom he had made his friends by his delightful, guileless, and attractive nature; and so it was everywhere. Troops of friends and no enemies were ever his *entourage*.

I should suppose that the happiest years of Oliphant's life were those subsequent to his first marriage — especially the later ones spent with his charming wife in Palestine. I think he knew then, for the first time, the true meanings of the words rest and home. Just before he started for his winter in Egypt, where he wrote "The Land of Khemi," in the rose-gardens of the palace, which had been lent him by the khedive, I went to wish him farewell at his old lodgings in Half-Moon Street, and found him with Mrs. Oliphant. It was delightful to see them together. She was so bright, spirituelle, and uncommon, with her slight (acquired) American accent. One could see at once that they were thoroughly congenial, sympathetic spirits — and it is sad to remember how short that happy union was, and that now they have both departed.

On his return to England, after his great loss, I saw him at the Athenæum, when he was preparing "Sympneumata" for the press. He then said that his wife was by his side, and that there was practically no separation between them; it was just as if she were alive, and with him as before.

He came to us for a day or two before leaving for Haifa, in the end of 1886. We thought him much aged, and that the extraordinarily exciting life he had led was beginning to tell upon his physique, though not on his elastic spirits. He was short of breath, and bent, and as he walked

about, with his large eyes and long grey beard, he might have been taken for an ideal picture of the Ancient Mariner; and indeed he had almost as wonderful a tale to tell! One of the younger generation called him "the Wizard," and truly a kindly wizard he was, beloved by young and old, longing with all his heart to bring good gifts to men, at the cost of his own toil and self-sacrifice. He was then full of the developments of the power of healing that he thought he possessed. He read to us a large correspondence from those who were in communication with him about their ailments (which, I may say in passing, he seemed to attribute mainly to demoniacal possession), and was fully alive to the humorous points that could not but occasionally arise; and in that, the last evening that we ever spent together, it is pleasant to remember that his laugh was as cheery and his conversation as interesting as ever.

To conclude: Oliphant was never known, as far as my experience goes, to speak unkindly of any one; and so it is, now that he has been taken from us in the prime of his power and influence, that there appears to be but one feeling and one language in reference to him. We all grieve that we shall not see that pleasant presence again, that we shall hear that delightful laugh no more, and that the companionship, of which the memory is so sweet, is now a memory only, and nothing more.

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From The Leisure Hour.

#### THE UNRIPE FRUIT OF EDUCATION IN INDIA.

THERE has been much progress among the educated classes in India. By an assiduous course of study from childhood to manhood, many natives acquire a proficiency in writing and speaking English which astonishes and delights those Englishmen with whom they come in contact. But those who succeed in gaining this proficiency bear a very small proportion to those who fail. In all countries there are corresponding classes. The university degrees of B.A. and M.A. are not easily obtained. A recent article in a Calcutta paper states that the candidates who have missed the coveted honors calmly style themselves "Failed B.A." and "Failed M.A.," to indicate that they reached the foot of the wall, though they could not surmount it. Behind the few hundreds



who get so far as the foot of the wall, there are thousands who have fallen out by the way, unable to pursue their studies any further. They have acquired a smattering of English, and so claim to be counted in the educated classes. In general they become eager candidates for any official employment, small or great, that may provide them with a livelihood.

Whilst they were studying the English language they struggled on through examinations in which their undigested knowledge was produced with a strange confusion of ideas. In seeking for official employment they make applications to the local authorities in terms which, though ludicrous, betray the agony of their souls. Their mistakes may probably be paralleled in many an English and American examination; but their grotesqueness has an Oriental style amusingly in contrast with the reports of the Western examiners.

The following compositions and examination answers, which were collected during a residence in India, may be taken as specimens of the unripe fruit of an English education. They come from different parts of India, but the names of men and of places have been altered, so as to leave no chance for identification.

I have always admired and envied the boy, a lad of fourteen, in the Chittagong School, who gave the following definitions of patrimony and matrimony, when he was requested by an examiner to explain several polysyllabic English words. Patrimony, wrote the youth, is what we inherit from our father; matrimony is what we inherit from our mother. This was written upwards of forty years ago in India to my certain knowledge; but it has recently appeared as a novelty in one of the English comic papers.

In an examination held at the Dacca College the native students of English history were asked the following question: Who were Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck? One of the answers was verbatim as follows:—

Charles II, or Pretender, represent himself to be Peter Simnel. In a dispute he was defeated, and afterwards was driven away from England, and thereby he was obliged to travel through a large tract of land. Being in such a miserable condition, his mind was overclouded with a deep melancholy. At last he embarked for France, and there sought assistance from the King, which was granted to him. With a large army he marched against England, and there struck terror into the hearts of his native brethren the English, but all his schemes and poweres were destroyed.

Henry VII represent himself to be Perkin Warbeck.

The following curious information was submitted to an examiner in English Literature at the Calcutta University:—

1. Blake having failed in getting any suitable employment in the education Department, he took the service of an Admiral.
  2. A neuter noun means that which is neither proper nor common.
  3. "Sure of foot" means "certain to go."
  4. "Baby words" mean "chattering like a woman."
  5. Thunder is said by some to be "the voice of God." Lightning is an electricity made by man.
  6. He seemed as from the tombs around,  
Rising at judgment day,  
Some giant Douglas may be found  
In all his old array. (*Marmion*.)
- The last line means that he came in clothes that he had not worn for a long time.

We next come to a different style of composition, where an imperfectly educated native student attempted to apply his learning to a practical purpose for the promotion of his own interest in the official field of patronage:—

To the Right Honorable X. Y. Z.,

Commissioner of the Patna Division.

With due deference and humble submission, I beg most respectfully to bring to your notice that through a variety of unforeseen events, I am compelled to state my condition in your presence. I am forced, by vicissitudes of fortune, to support the family of my uncle, the late Translator of the Judge's Court at Patna, on account of his premature death, caused from a variety of diseases. In addition to this, I am obliged to give up my own College career, for my father's infirmity at age. I am now left, in this fluctuating world, to groan under the anxiety of my family burden, and to seek up and down, to lay together fortunes, and to feather my father's nest. Now the stomach of my sense is that you will be our patron for livelihood. For none is known to me better, who would be the supporter of our family than you, as was said by my late Uncle. I am playing the skipping spirit: but it is nothing rather than to prize your tune. I hope you will soon have a favourable glance on this needy, poor, and helpless man. I am waiting for a happy and favourable reply. I am, Sir, your most obedient Petitioner, S. C. Dass. Sir, direct me this: S. C. Dass, via Patna to the West Post-office.

It is not known if this application was successful. The handwriting was good, and doubtless the young man had been compelled by sheer poverty to seek for employment before he had completed his education in English.

The following letter was addressed to

Major B——, political agent for western India :—

Honored Sir, — Humbly sheweth, that now the wound of his sore is curing, he believes to see your honor within two or three days after a perfect cure. Further, he sends to your honor a *valayate* sheep (Dumba) with a circular tail.

It is brought up on corn ; but on account of his distracted heart within these days it is not well cherished. If well fed for a month or 20 days, and then slain, he believes its tail will also increase, and the meat would be very delicious.

That he hopes your honor would accept it, and it is for the lot of his son, that the petitioner, being involved in sore, could not remind your honor for his maintenance. I have the honor to be, honored Sir,

Your most obedient servant,  
NEWAB M. Z. A. SHA.

We now come to a more ambitious style of composition. On the occasion of a Christmas prize-giving in India the following account of it was written for a native newspaper which is published in the English language :—

The place was so crowded, and there was such a rush of visitors, that the writer, standing by a lady who was seated in a chair, was about to tumble upon her head, but fortunately such a mishap did not take place. No sooner her excellency Lady Dufferin occupied the special seat provided for the occasion, when commenced the distribution of prizes, consisting of silver earrings, numbering a dozen, if not more, and beautiful workboxes, and dolls whose name was legion, the Countess standing on her legs all the time, and giving away those prizes to each girl by her own hand. Her demeanor, her conduct, her ways and manners, her dress, and everything else, were befitting the exalted rank and position she holds. A Hindu gentleman remarked before the writer, if she had been the wife of an Indian prince or rajah, or even a rich Babu, her person would have been adorned, or rather overloaded, with gold, emeralds, diamonds, and other precious stones ; but hers was a simple dress, a simple pair of shoes, and simple and plain bonnet, and nothing else, as far as one could judge or see from a respectable distance.

We next come to a composition of a different class. It is a poetical effusion addressed by a native Christian, who sometimes officiated as clerk in the English Church, to the magistrate of the station of Dumdum :—

1. J. P. Brown, Esq., my noble and generous Sir,  
From thee I hope to obtain my desire.
2. For noble is thy heart, and noble thy mind,  
To fulfil the desire of all mankind.

3. May God bless your honour, with a good will  
My humble desire, and request to fulfil.
4. If your honour will fulfil my desire with pleasure,  
God Almighty will increase your honour's treasure.
5. Altho' the gift may be great or small,  
But the nobility of thy heart is above all.
6. Blessed is the man who is willing to give,  
The poor and needy from distress to relieve.
7. If your honor will relieve me, with a cheerful heart,  
Thy goodness from my memory shall never depart.
8. If your honour will have pity on my miserable case,  
God Almighty will pour upon you His infinite grace :
9. Which grace from your honour shall never depart,  
And I shall always remember your kindness in my heart.
10. A gentleman that has a gracious heart,  
In doing good he shall never depart.
11. If it be thy good and generous will,  
In a word thou canst my desire fulfil.

There is some reason to fear that this example is not quite a genuine native production, and it was probably revised and touched up by the chaplain before it was sent to the magistrate.

The following letter was written by the native secretary of a wealthy landowner to a sporting police-officer. Tigers would occasionally appear on the landowner's estate, and he used to invite his English friends to go out to shoot them. Sometimes the English sportsmen became impatient, and wanted to know if any tigers were forthcoming. The following was his answer :—

My dear Sir — I am sorry to say that on account of the heavy and incessant rains I can scarcely hear anything of a tiger. I think they have betaken themselves in the deepest recesses of the thick jungles. They will probably come out when the atmosphere will get clear of the clouds. However, I will not be a jot remiss to let you know when I get any news of the tigers. On account of this rainy weather I am laboring under a bad health (that is, I have caught cold). Other members of my family are in good health. I hope this to find you and yours the same. I am your affectionate friend,

RAJAH P. C. ROY.

The next document has been translated into English from the vernacular language in which it was written by a young lady of about sixteen. At the examination of a girls' school by the local committee of managers, the pupils were requested to write the story of their daily life and avocations. The exercises which they produced were very similar in many points, but this was one of the best:—

After getting leave from school on Saturday I went home, and put away my slate and books. I next took off my school-dress, and having put on other clothes I attended to household work. When evening came I lit the light in the house, and taking my beads I went to worship our God Jugonath. Having prostrated myself before the great Lord, Jugonath, I went into the house, and taking my book sat down to read. When the night was somewhat advanced, I put away my book. Then having taken my food and washed my face and hands, I spread my bed on the ground and sat down. Then I gave praise to the great Father and supreme Lord, and I went to sleep. In the early morning I got up, and having performed my household duties I took my book and sat down to read. When the sun was well up, I anointed myself with oil, and went out to bathe. Then I came home, and changed my wet clothes and put them in the sun to dry. Then having made my reverence to our household spiritual teacher, I made my prostrations to the sun, and having received spiritual comfort, I returned to the house. I then took food, and having washed my face and hands, I ate some betel-nut, and sat down to write. When the day was spent I returned to my household work, and again worshipped the god Jugonath. Now I have come again to school, and if there are any faults or mistakes in this exercise I hope that they will be forgiven.

Here are a few more specimens from the examination answers of schoolboys:

1. The young woman was grown-up.  
Interpreted—She came to years of maturity without the assistance of her mother.
2. Bade the clarions sound to horse (Marmion).  
Interpreted—Ordered them to play the trumpets to the horses.
3. Bevis lies dying in his stall (Marmion).  
Interpreted—The horse was in his stable being colored.\*
4. Her lion port, her awe-commanding face (Gray's Bard).  
Interpreted—The gate of her palace on which there were two lions.†

C. J. BUCKLAND (late B.C.S.)

\* In India it is a common practice to dye a horse's mane and tail.

† There are two stone lions over each gateway of the viceroy's palace in Calcutta.

From The Spectator.

#### THE EIFFEL TOWER.

It is not M. Eiffel who is to blame for his tower. It was natural enough that a large contractor in iron, seeing a chance of putting up the tallest building ever erected in iron, or in any other material, should jump at the chance of obtaining for nothing such a magnificent advertisement. Before the erection of the tower, M. Eiffel was known only to a few industrial specialists; now he is recognized throughout the world as a man whose tenders for gigantic ironwork have the first claim to be considered. It is too much to ask that a business man should miss such an opportunity; and his offer once accepted, he has fulfilled his promises with the honesty which, so far as we see, belongs in our day to the great engineers alone. He pledged himself to build by May 1st a tower of iron five hundred feet higher than the Great Pyramid, four hundred feet higher than the tallest structure previously completed by man, which is, we believe, the Washington Memorial; and in spite of the mechanical difficulties—think of the mere weight drawn up into the clouds—of the ridicule of all Paris, where ridicule, they say, kills everything except General Boulanger's pretensions, and of repeated strikes among his workmen, he has kept his pledge, and kept it with time to spare. His tower is there, nine hundred and eighty-four feet high, apparently safe, and may be ascended by any one of the fortunate majority who are not liable to turn giddy when, on looking down, they see nothing below them except air. The external work was completed on Sunday, the building was declared finished, though some heavy work remains in the construction of lifts, and a huge flag was unfurled to flutter in the breeze, almost invisible, despite its size, to the cheering crowd below. All that is well, because it is well that contracts should be kept; but the success of the undertaking only increases the difficulty of understanding why it was ever begun. Why were the government of France and the municipality of Paris willing to pay £160,000 in order that the Eiffel Tower should be put up? Nobody pretends that it is or will be of the slightest use. There are no experiments possible on the tower, not even in heliography, which could not be made with much greater ease from any low, conical hill, the tower, for all its marvellous altitude, being lower than a hundred natural elevations about which no one talks. It is said to be

quite useless as an observatory, owing to its perceptible, though slight, swaying; and if it were useful, it would not for that purpose be worth its cost. Any hillock a thousand feet high would make a better base. There is nothing of hygiene to be learned up there which could not be learned on a hill, and nothing to be seen from the tower, say by a military engineer, which would not be seen as accurately from a captive balloon. Though the ugliness of the structure has been exaggerated, its tapering form now suggesting a mast of preternatural height, nobody pretends that it is beautiful, even with the beauty, such as it is, of a gigantic poplar; while the wonder it might inspire is half lost from the absence in its close neighborhood of any adequate standard of comparison. It does not suggest any grand victory over nature, for it is not so long, or so strong, or so difficult to make as many iron bridges; and nature is not conquered because an arch is repeated a score of times upwards into the air. The first arch is the achievement, not the twentieth. The tower has not even the grand claim of the Pyramids, that apparently endless durability which it is so difficult for the short-lived race of man not to respect, and in some dim way to fear; for though M. Eiffel hopes for fifty years, no other observer, mindful of earthquake, of lightning, and of cyclones, will expect for it that longevity. Indeed, almost every observer who describes it suggests certain frightful consequences which might accompany its fall. Those who sanctioned and paid for the building can have been influenced only by the desire of putting up the tallest structure ever designed, and how is it that such a fancy pleases them? Their vanity is gratified? In what way? M. Eiffel gains a repute of a sort as an audacious builder in iron, and a quite wonderful organizer of labor, but neither the government nor Paris gains any credit except for wasteful eccentricity. The money would have secured many beautiful works of art, or founded a perpetual charity, and it has been expended on a senseless though striking putting together of iron beams, girders, and rafters in unusual repetition. The single charm is bigness, and wherein lies the attraction of bigness? There must be one, for at intervals in all ages, and under all circumstances, man has yielded to it. Just after the highest age of Greek art, Lysippus the sculptor proposed to carve Mount Athos into a statue of Alexander; and in our own day, the New Yorkers have constructed a God-

dess of Liberty in their harbor colossal enough to serve as an electric lighthouse. In Asia, at all times, bigness has been held to be the equivalent of greatness, and while the highest in the Hindoo trinity vindicates his supremacy in the universe by an infinite protraction of his length, the spade with which a god digs to the centre of the earth is billions of cubits long. The Rabbinical legends, too, are full of Og and his wondrous magnitude—he once carried on his head a rock broader than the camp of all the children of Israel—and if we may trust some translations which once appeared in *Blackwood*, their authors endeavored to increase the respect of the race for their great deliverer, by attributing to Moses more than mortal size. The Jin of Mahommedan legend always, when in wrath, towers to the sky; and though the actual architecture of the later Arabs was distinguished for delicate beauty, their imaginary architecture is usually marked, when they mean to make an impression of grandeur, by an Eiffel-like immoderateness of mere size. Nimrod probably built the Tower of Belus for the sake of its surpassing bigness, as well as in the hope of reaching to the vault above; and the Chinese emperor, we fancy, thought his Great Wall a work of lofty imagination, as well as of rather cowardly defence. But then, Asiatics are the children of the world, with childhood's lust for wonder; and the Parisians are the world's old men, satiated with sights, worn out with sensations, *blasés* with the marvels and miracles of material civilization. They have not only intellect, but artistic sense, and a keen perception of the ridiculous; and why do they think that if they put up the tallest tower ever seen, a tower, too, made, as it were, of filagree, all the world will throng to Paris to gaze and to admire?

We cannot but think that the Eiffel Tower is but one more mark among many of a certain decadence, it may be only a temporary decadence, in Parisian thought. The children of the great city, all of whom receive from her so strangely separate a stamp—how the spirit of her founder, Julian the Apostate, must exult as he witnesses the intellectual progress of his city!—worn out with work, with events, with pleasure, and with excitement, are showing many of the signs of satiety; and this tower, in its unapproachable altitude and perfect inutility, is one of them. Like Nero, who must have closely resembled intellectually an over developed Parisian, they have begun the search for the impos-

sible which marks the decay of intellectual health. There is no youthfulness left in Parisians. They are displaying in art the passion of cruelty as Nero displayed it in act; they use science as a mere means of gratification; and they exult even in bigness,—suppressing in that their more natural instinct in art,—if only it is unusual, bizarre, even monstrous, so that it will give them a new sensation. They are so jaded, so weary, so hopeless of sufficient excitement even from the collection they are trying to make of all beautiful things from all the countries of earth, that they are grateful to M. Eiffel, even while they condemn his work, because it is unequalled of its kind, and therefore gives them something fresh to imitate, to talk of, and to gaze at with stretched-out necks. They are less tired for a moment of time, just as Roman patricians were less tired in the arena; and therefore they are content with their tower. They would be more content still if, when the Exhibition is over, and the guests have departed, and the gains have been counted, and ennui has settled down again, the tower would suddenly fall. The Parisians are not exactly cruel—at least, they do not avow the Roman indifference about human life and suffering—but we wonder, if the tower could be made to fall at an advertised point of time, how many Parisians would for any consideration whatever miss that crowning sensation of their festival. Not many, we fear; and in that temper of the great city, even though it be in the temper of a single generation which in boyhood was over-excited by disaster, we read a sombre omen for the immediate future. Paris is no “province covered with houses;” Paris is a living and conscious entity; and Paris has reached the stage in the hunt for excitement when exaggeration is for itself a source of delight. The omen is the worse, not the better, because Paris, unlike Rome, retains the artistic sense; and before it can delight in the Eiffel Tower must be suppressing much.

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From St. James's Gazette.

#### THE PARCEL POST.

A LARGE circuit of buildings somewhat in the fashion of a wheel—a turret in the centre, with wings radiating from it—surrounded with a high ring wall which has a *cheval de frise* on its top, and is thus separated from the thoroughfares and lanes of

a squalid neighborhood; the entrance as to an arsenal on the border of a hostile country; then a wide space, broad stone passage and staircases to interior courts, with fronts of a stately if stern type of architecture; the roar of the London streets shut out, and but the faintest note of a confused murmur penetrating the walls,—such was the aspect of the disused Cold Bath-fields Prison when we visited it a short time back. Changes in the mode of dealing with prisoners led to the abandonment of the prison by the Home Office some years ago, and the consequent transfer of the inmates to Pentonville. It is a pity that such a change was made. The prison seemingly was well fitted for its purpose, and a large expenditure will be necessary before it can be utilized in any other way. The walls are so thick and strongly built that no contractor will engage to pull them down; cement and stone enter so largely into their construction that to “clean the bricks,” to use a technical phrase, would be a matter of difficulty, and more expensive than the purchase of new ones. By bit and bit, we suppose, the prison will be broken up, but not for a long time; and meanwhile all that quantity of steel and metal-work lies rusting there.

But away from the prison proper on its east wing—a long row of buildings formerly used as the bakery and treadmill—is a different scene. It is the head office of the parcel post. The entire prison has been taken over by the Post Office authorities, but only this portion of the buildings is as yet in use. The postal telegraph department has a share of it for its stores, and the rest is set apart for the work of the parcel post. In the eastern side of the ring wall a new gateway has been pierced, and through this at all hours, except for about two in the middle of the night, the parcel vans enter and emerge with their loads. Facing the entrance is a long, low platform at which the vans draw up; and adjoining this platform in the first room so much of the inland parcel post as is done at this dépôt is transacted. Behind this room is another, the Foreign Parcels Department; and down below are the Suburban Sorting Room, store-rooms, and other offices necessary for carrying on the work. The whole of the parcel-post business of the metropolis is not transacted here; but chiefly that portion of it which relates to the delivery and collection of parcels in the East Central District. To supplement the work done at the Mount Pleasant Dépôt—for so the head office is styled—there are



branch offices attached to several of the London railway termini, which deal with the business in their respective districts. It will thus be seen that the work is, to a certain extent, decentralized; for in that manner it has been found by experience to be the most efficiently performed.

Throughout the day the work is carried on; but the greater portion of it is done at night or during the evening. It is found that the public delays posting its parcels till the late hours of the afternoon. The work therefore comes with a rush, and for some hours in the evening all hands are kept busily employed. Towards the close of the afternoon signs of increased activity begin to be discerned; vans drive up in rapid succession, porters hurry to and fro with loads, and inspectors are on the watch for any irregularity. "Stop that truck!" shouts one; his quick eye has noticed that a hamper is unsealed, and he opens it for an explanation. "Empty; right! pass on!" and the porter disappears through the swing doors with his load. Round wide troughs deft-handed sorters stand, and they deal with the contents as each hamper is emptied out. Behind them a rack of large baskets is ranged, and into these, for the different lines of railway, the parcels are dropped. The baskets, when full, are removed to another part of the room, for their contents to undergo the second sorting. The second sorting is into "roads" or routes. When this process is completed the parcels are separated finally for the towns, placed in hampers, sealed down, and despatched. To cope successfully with the work, there is a permanent staff at the head office of nearly three hundred and fifty men; and of this number about sixty are engaged on the foreign post, which is carried on distinct from the inland work. In addition there are the employes at the branch offices; which brings the total number engaged in the metropolitan parcel service to about nine hundred men. This does not include the drivers of the vans, of which there are about two hundred and fifty plying between the various offices and the railway stations; these men are hired by the contractor who supplies all the means of conveyance.

It has been said that the parcel post is carried on at a direct loss to the country; but there does not appear to be any ground for the statement. The letter and parcel services are so merged in each other that it is difficult to say where the one finishes and the other begins. If no gain accrues from the carriage of parcels,

there is no loss. The rates paid to the railway companies seem somewhat high; fifty-five per cent. of the amounts paid by the senders of the parcels which they convey is handed over to them. But then it should be remembered that the same sum is paid for the carriage of a parcel from Epsom to London as for one posted in Plymouth and delivered in Edinburgh and which has to be taken over several railway lines. The work has grown enormously since its inauguration more than five years ago. During the first twelve months about twenty million parcels passed through the post-offices; now double that number is annually cleared, and the work is still growing. London, as might be expected, takes the lion's share; last year eleven and a half million packages were received for transmission in the metropolitan area, and of this about a third was for delivery within the same radius. The number delivered in the town district is not so high; still it reached the respectable figure of seven millions for the last year. Provision for the extra work which Christmas brings has to be made months beforehand. As early as August in each year extra hands are engaged, and their training commenced for the duties which will be allotted them. But even with the addition of a thousand men difficulties are experienced in dealing with the quadrupled work of the Christmas week; and it is only by the employment of all on extra time that they can be successfully laid.

Any mention of the parcel post would be incomplete without reference to the foreign work which is done at Mount Pleasant. Here all the foreign parcels of the kingdom are received, and thence despatched. The chief feature of it is the examination and, when necessary, the opening of parcels received from abroad. To carry out this duty there is a staff of twenty-four customs officers on watch, who work independently of the Post Office; and on busy nights — principally when the Continental mails arrive — their office is no sinecure. Infringements of the Merchandise Marks Act are carefully looked for, as well as the presence of exciseable articles. Attempts to evade the regulations are, as might be expected, not infrequent. "Yes," says a customs official, taking up a packet of needles bearing the imprint of a Birmingham firm, "these are probably all right; but they must be detained until we have ascertained whether they are samples returned from abroad or not." Despatches for abroad range from twice daily to France and Germany to

about once in two months to the Falkland Islands.

The number of articles sent through the post is, as we have seen, great. Their variety also is very large. Garters and ice-cream, curling-tongs and cats, live lizards and dead mice, silk hats and sucking-pigs, have all in turn been delivered in one place or another. One parcel posted a couple of months ago in a northern suburb was declared to contain "Wherein apurel." Whether the contents were as described some foreign Customs officers discovered. Gardeners use the post largely for the conveyance of flowers, and at certain seasons of the year a large increase in the work is noticeable solely on that account. Primrose Day is one such occasion; and each year great numbers of Lord Beaconsfield's favorite flower pass through the post. On the last anniversary there were twenty-seven thousand packages of them.

But now the hampers for the night mails have been made up, their contents checked, and invoices written out; and the sorters, released for an interval, have a few minutes' "stand easy" until the next call of duty arrives. It would be interesting to follow the after-course of despatches from London; and on another occasion, perhaps, we may be able to accompany the mails away.

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From Temple Bar.

#### THE PULPIT IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS.

In the days when leading articles, mob oratory, and universal libraries were unknown, the pulpit was a much greater power in the land than it is now. By means of it chiefly large bodies of men could be reached, and to it there was little or no counteracting influence. People flocked with eagerness round the pulpit placed outside the cathedral in the large cities, to hear the sermons preached there on Sunday afternoons and on week-days during Lent. Both preacher and congregation were more at ease, more unrestrained than they were when within the sacred building itself. The sermon became more of a popular harangue; anecdotes and amusing stories were introduced; the preacher would point a lesson from some incident which was happening before him in the open street; the interest of the listeners was kept up. The people did not come simply to be taught, they came to be interested, to be moved, to

hear evil-doers, even if in high places, denounced unsparingly. With the gradual awakening of men's minds which came with the sixteenth century, the power of the pulpit increased amazingly. The nation was divided into two schools of thought; the exponents on each side endeavored to persuade by means of the pulpit, whilst they coerced by means of the stake and the prison. "Have at them, Master Latimer, have at them!" cried the people who filled St. Paul's Churchyard to the preacher, as they made a passage for him to reach the cross. They had no idea of being listeners only—"passive buckets to be poured into"—they intended to show which way their sympathies went in the great question then agitating England, to mark approval or disapproval of sentiments delivered. Thus, when shortly afterwards Bishop Bonner was preaching from the same spot, some one in the crowd threw a dagger at him as emphatic mark of disapprobation.

It is easy to note in the language of the sermons of that time how unrestrained the preacher was. Latimer, when he was preaching, scattered denunciations, epithets, invective, and sarcasm about him in a way which a modern audience would not appreciate. He attacks the judges for unfairness, for taking of bribes; the citizens of London, for their selfishness, their greedy extravagance; "their brother," he cries, "shall die in the streets of cold, he shall lie sick at their door and perish for hunger!" The ladies before him are reproved for their vanity, "laying out their hair in tussocks and tufts;" and for the general people he has such epithets as you "velvet-coats, you upskips, you hodipoles, you doddypecks." The preachers of that time could, moreover, employ that dangerous weapon, humor, which a modern preacher had best avoid. The people then were used to humor, and understood it. Latimer was preaching once on the want of interest shown in church services, and blaming the clergy for it, he said: "A neighbor met a gentlewoman of London, and said, 'Mistress, whither goest thou?' 'Marry,' said she, 'I am going to St. Thomas of Acres, to the sermon. I could not sleep last night, and I am going now thither; I never failed of good sleep there.'" Sometimes his humor is bolder still. Preaching one day of Elias stopping the rain, he suddenly stopped, and said: "I think there be some Elias about at this time which stoppeth the rain; we have not had rain a good while."

The outspokenness of the preachers

was not confined to occasions when they were addressing the citizens only. The sermons preached before the court are full of unsparing denunciations. Lever, in a grand sermon before the king and the court, denounced the nobles for their harshness to the poor, and with amazing boldness added: "My lords of the laity and clergy, in the name of God I warn you to take heed. When the Lord of hosts shall see his flock scattered and spoilt, if He follow the trace of the blood it will lead Him straightway into this Court." Truly, a man who could speak in that way must have felt he was the servant of One who was Lord of lords.

In time the custom of preaching at the market cross passed away, and the sermons were delivered from the parish church. But they did not at once lose their popular character. They were frequently of great length, and an hourglass by the pulpit cushion allowed the preacher and congregation to note the time. The congregations, too, had not yet learned their present passivity. It was allowed to them to applaud or hiss the preacher, as the occasion required, the applause taking the form of a loud hum of approbation. Dr. Johnson relates, on the authority of his father, that Dr. Burnet and Dr. Sprat once preached on the same day before Parliament. When Burnet preached, part of the congregation hummed so loudly and so long, that the delighted preacher sat down to enjoy it, rubbing his face with his handkerchief. Dr. Sprat, during his sermon, was honored with the like animating hum, but he stretched forth his hand, and exclaimed: "Peace, peace, I pray you, peace." When the same Dr. Burnet was preaching on another occasion before the House of Commons, he turned his glass at the end of the hour, as a sign that he was going to continue his sermon, when his audience broke out into a loud hum of approbation — a strong testimony either to his eloquence or to their endurance.

The rule of the Puritans was favorable to the length of sermons. These are the times which have given us the words Holdfasts, Spintexts, and others. Most people delighted in long discourses, and for those who did not, there were the stocks to teach them a more excellent way. The municipal records of all our towns will show how far compulsory attendance at church was carried. The records of Dorchester for February, 1656, show the following:—

"Feb. 7. Samuel Cole, convicted of

absenting himself from church, fined 2s. 6d.

"Feb. 9. Katherine Bartlett fined 2s. 6d. for absenting herself from church contrary to law.

"Feb. 14. John Samwayes ordered to be stocked for not being at church these five weeks."

What excuse these people had for non-attendance is not recorded; but one would have thought that even Puritan rigor would have relented in a case such as the following: "Two sweethearts convicted and fined for walking in a lane during sermon-time."

When England had once again relapsed into indifference to sermons, whether long or short, it was the out-door preaching of Whitefield and Wesley that aroused the interest of the people, leading to a reawakening of religious life which has continued to our times. The pulpit at the present day is perhaps too exclusive, it reflects but slightly the character of the times, but it is something to keep it from vulgarity. Anything which is popular now seems destined to be vulgarized; there is always a danger of a lowering of tone, a danger which our forefathers had not to contend against, for if they were plain and outspoken, they had the instincts of "nature's gentlemen."

WALTER SLATER.

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From The Civil and Military Gazette.  
COMMON SENSE IN MILITARY DRESS.

THERE is, perhaps, nothing on which our modern dress improvers—we mean reformers—pride themselves more than on the possession of sound, practical common sense. The terms "workmanlike," "adapted to the conditions of active service," and the like, are constantly in their mouths; and they twit their opponents with being mere barrack-square soldiers and pipeclay martinets. Well, we confess to a weakness for pipeclay, and a martinet strictness in dress both in the field and on the review ground, and specially to a barrack-square liking for our old national color of red. It is not only smarter to look at, but distinctly more workmanlike against any enemy we are likely to encounter—except, perhaps, the Boers. We admit, of course, that red is decidedly more visible than khaki on the usual background of the plains of India, when those plains are dried up towards the close of the cold weather; but against a green

background, red, though visible, is not very much more so than khaki, and is a very much harder object to aim at; because green and red being complementary colors, the red appears to dance on the green as soon as the eye is brought down to the sights, whereas khaki does not. Any one can satisfy himself of the truth of this by direct experiment. Again, red on brown, blue, purple, or reddish yellow, when dotted about, and not in large masses, enters so largely into the composition of these colors—as every colorist knows—that at very short distances it seems to fade into the mass behind, and by no means “to spring at the eyes,” as the French say, in the way usually imagined. We will grant that khaki still has some advantage, but deny that it is as great as usually supposed; and, further, we contend that this extreme degree of invisibility is in itself by no means of such importance, against the class of enemies we shall usually have to deal with, as many appear to imagine. In the first place, our average enemy possessing no power of manœuvre, it is more or less immaterial whether he sees our preparations for attack. When it comes to close fighting, the advantage conferred on us by the old red coat can scarcely be underrated. At these distances, aimed fire can scarcely be said to exist; the struggle is really a mental one between

the two forces; and anything which heightens the impression on the mind conveyed by our rush is far too precious to be lightly thrown away. But all the time we are forgetting the original reason which, according to tradition, led to the adoption of the red color, viz., that in the course of an action men get killed and wounded, and blood is spirted about in a very unpleasant manner. After an hour of heavy artillery fire the scene presented by the men fired at is one of indescribable horror—every man is more or less splashed and stained with blood—and at the time it is impossible to tell who is really wounded or merely shamming; and this argument was specially put forward in Austria as a reason for abolishing their old white uniforms—though, by the way, their present grey blue is almost as objectionable as the old one. But khaki in this respect is horrible; the least stain of any kind shows on it; and it was for this reason it was so promptly discontinued in the home army. Clean weapons and smartly turned-out accoutrements are the outward visible sign of valuable soldierly qualities in the soldier, and where these are lost the downward path has been entered on. All military history does not contain an instance of troops who failed through personal smartness; but a large volume might be filled with examples to the contrary.

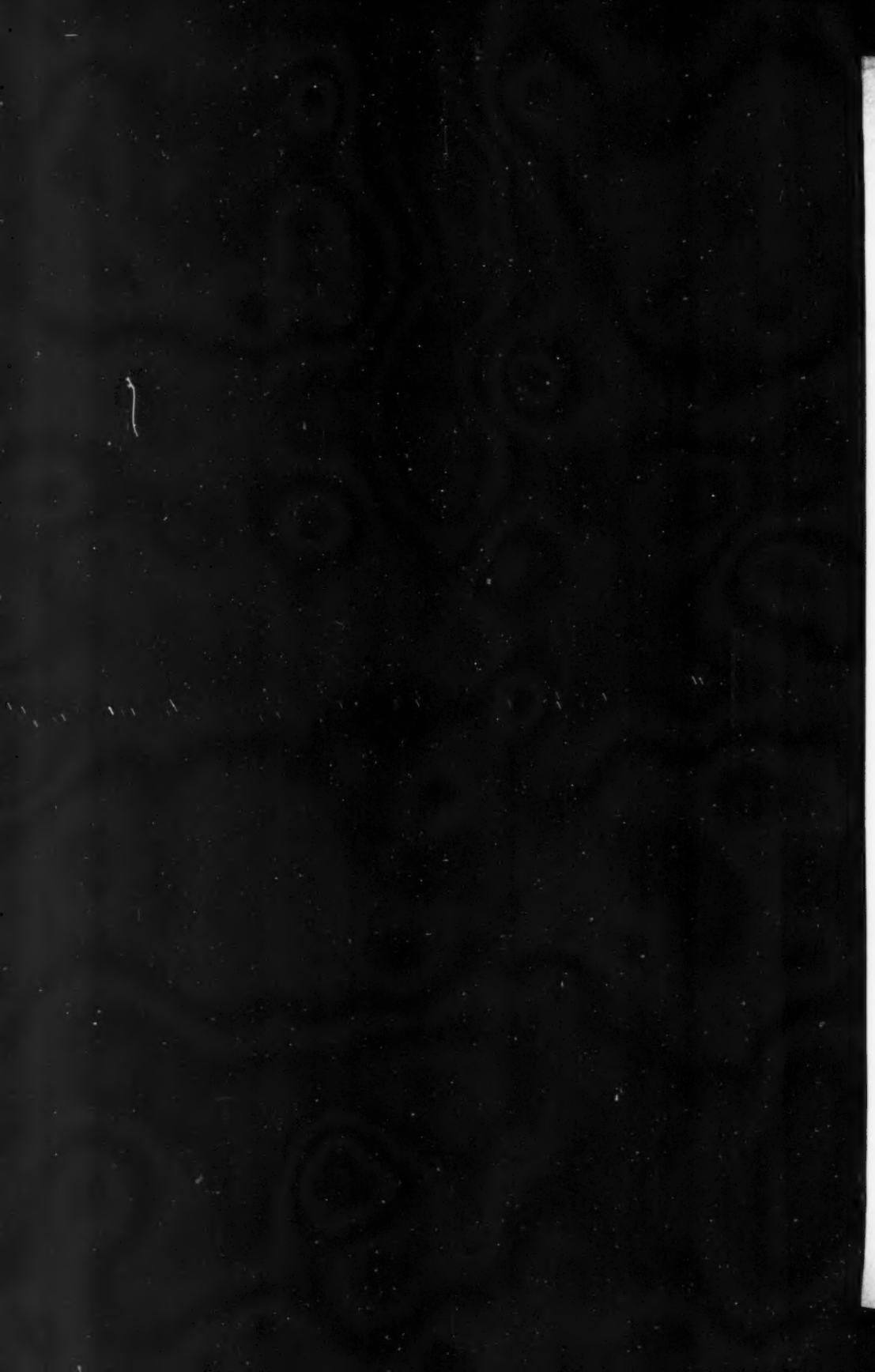
**POST-PLIOCENE FOOTPRINTS.**—The discovery of human footprints on volcanic rocks near the shore of Lake Managua, Nicaragua, under circumstances which seem to assign them a remote antiquity, has been announced for several years. Dr. D. G. Brenton has described in a paper read before the American Philosophical Society a specimen of these footprints sent to him by Dr. Carl Flint, of Rivas, Nicaragua. The volcano of Tizcapa, which furnishes the material forming the tufas on which the footprints occur, is one of several in the vicinity which have long been extinct, and whose craters are occupied by deep and still lakes. Dr. Brenton's specimen was taken from a quarry on the lake shore at a point where the overlying strata present a thickness of twenty-one feet beneath the surface soil. These strata comprise five well-marked beds

of tufa, beneath which is a deposit of clay, and below this four more beds with other accumulations in the seams of pumice and volcanic stone. A heavy deposit of tufa lying on yellow sand is then reached. This is the last in the series, and bears on its upper surface innumerable footprints, some deeply imprinted, while others are but superficial impressions. As to the age of the footprints, Dr. Flint believes the yellow sand under them to be eocene, but the small shells which it contains are deemed by Professor Angelo Heilprin to be more nearly post-pliocene than eocene. In view of this and the indications furnished by the overlying strata, Dr. Brenton concludes that there is not sufficient evidence to remove the footprints further back than the present post-pliocene or quaternary period.

Science and Art.







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